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from Mrs Vaughan

Mrs. Vaughan. Wayne 4 February 1845

THE NEW WORLD.

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THE

MYSTERIES OF PARIS.

A NOVEL.

BY EUGENE SUE.

INTRODUCTION.

We take great pleasure in introducing to the American public the most celebrated work of Eugene Sue, at the present time the most popular, and one of the most brilliant, authors of France. The "Mysteries of Paris" was received, during its publication in weekly numbers, with an excitement and enthusiasm which seldom has been equalled even in the French capital. The office of the Journal which issued the story was thronged by crowds of anxious readers on the day of its publication—it was caught up with the greatest avidity at the hotels and public libraries—orders came in for it from the remotest departments; and, to complete the excitement, the reading public were thrown into tears by a brain fever which attacked the author during its composition. All were astonished at the adventurous flight of the daring genius; many predicted that it would be impossible for him to pourtray the eccentric and diverse characters which he had introduced; many conjectured that a story with such an exciting commencement could not be sustained with corresponding interest. "Where will he lead us to?" "How will it end?" were questions asked in every circle. Mademoiselle Le Normand, the celebrated *devineresse*, exclaimed, that her sole pang in death was that she could never read the concluding chapters of the "Mysteries of Paris." But the work continued to be issued, with an increase of interest as every succeeding number appeared; the characters neither killed the author, nor he them; and its popularity and triumph were so well insured, after the issue of the tenth number, that Sue had the pleasure of refusing one hundred thousand francs for the copy-right. The novel certainly excites the most intense and startling interest. If the reader will peruse one number, we have no fear but that he will call for a second, however much of interest is lost by the translation. As the tale proceeds, he will be introduced to every diversity of scene, from the most harrowing to the most touching—to every variety of character, from the most degraded to the most spiritual. The taste for the horrible and the taste for the refined, will find in it a source for its gratification; those who admire the conceptions of Salvator Rosa, those who are subdued by the pencil of Claude Lorraine, will find, in the vast range of Sue's imagination, a gallery to which they can resort with equal delight. If the work does not find readers in this country, it must be the fault of the translator—there is but one opinion of its merit and interest among the readers of the original. It must be confessed, that it is exceedingly difficult to render this exciting narrative into English: the rude slang of the bandits and the simplicity of *Fleur de Marie's* French are equally perplexing. No pains have been spared to overcome these obstacles, and we submit this version to the public with great confidence that the spirit of the original will be found to have been preserved, and the language of the author conveyed as literally as the idiom will permit.

15 Park Place, *New York, Sept. 30th*, 1842.

Entered according to act of Congress, by J. Winchester, in the Clerk's Office of the Southern District of New York, in the year 1843.

PART FIRST.

CHAPTER I.....THE TAPIS-FRANC.

A TAPIS-FRANC is the name given by thieves and robbers to grog-shops of the lowest description. A liberated convict, who is called in their unearthly language an ogre, and a woman of the same character, an ogress, keep generally these low abodes, haunted by the refuse population of Paris—liberated galley slaves, pickpockets, robbers and murderers. If any crime has been committed, the vigilant police surround these places with their toils to catch the offender. This preface will serve to warn the reader that he must prepare himself for thrilling scenes of crime and horror. He will be conveyed into regions he has never visited before, and introduced to characters as hideous and repulsive as reptiles in a swamp. Who is not familiar with the descriptions which Cooper—the American Scott—has given of the barbarous customs of the Indians: their language strange, yet poetic—the thousand stratagems to which they resort to avoid or pursue their enemies! Who has not shuddered for the fate of the farmer and backwoodsman, when they were surrounded by wandering tribes of savages, rejected by civilization on account of their sanguinary disposition! We will endeavor in the following pages, to unfold to the reader some passages from the life of other barbarians, who, like the Indians so well depicted by Cooper, are disowned and rejected by civilization. These savages are in our midst, and we might meet them daily, should we venture in those haunts where they assemble to plot murder or robbery and to divide the spoils of their victims. These men have manners peculiar to themselves. Their fancy-women live with them. Their language is also their own—a language mysterious and obscene, and replete with images bloody as their actions. Like the Indians, they give each other names corresponding with their energy, their cruelty, or some peculiar physical deformity. We cannot approach these scenes of terror without feelings of great distrust. We fear to be reproached with voluntarily choosing such repulsive episodes. We fear to be judged inadequate to the task of representing in a faithful, bold and vigorous manner these eccentric characters. While writing these fear-inspiring passages, we could not guard against an unpleasant, we cannot say painful

anxiety, lest we should be charged with a ridiculous affectation. While reflecting that our readers might be inspired with similar feelings, we asked ourselves whether we should desist or persevere in the path which we have marked out; whether, indeed, such pictures ought to be presented to the public eye. We were for a long time in doubt; and unless the imperious exigency of the narrative had demanded it, we should almost regret having located in so horrible a place the facts which follow. We however rely with some confidence on that sort of curiosity oftentimes excited by scenes of terror. We also rely upon the effect of contrast. In such kind of writing as this, it is often useful to reproduce certain characters, certain existences, and certain figures of a shade so dark as to relieve by scenes of a livelier character. The reader is now informed of the excursion we propose to take into the very midst of this race of savages, who fill our prisons and galleys, and finally perish on the scaffold. He will perhaps condescend to follow us. The investigation will undoubtedly be novel to him. We beg of him now to place his feet on the lowest step of the social ladder; and as the story progresses, the atmosphere will become purer and purer.

On the 13th of December, during a dark and rainy evening, an athletic man, clad in a miserable blouse, passed over the Pont au Change, and rushed into the *Cité*—a labyrinth of dark, narrow and crooked streets, extending from the Palais de Justice as far as Notre Dame. The vicinity of the Palais de Justice, although limited in extent, and watched by a vigilant police, yet serves as a shelter and rendezvous to the malefactors of Paris. Is it not strange that an attraction, fatal and irresistible, incessantly draws those criminals to that awful tribunal which condems them to the prison, the galley and the scaffold? On the night in question, the wind rushed in violent gusts through the narrow lanes of that gloomy retreat; the dim lights, vacillating in the wind, were feebly reflected in the dark gutter which flowed over the pavements. The air was admitted into these degraded abodes through broken and worm-eaten casements. Dark and pestilential alleys conducted to still darker and more pestilential stairways, so steep that one could scarcely ascend, even with the aid of the rope, which was fastened by iron hooks to the damp wall. The lower floors of these houses were mostly occupied as the shops of coal-dealers, butchers, and venders of tainted meat. Worthless as their contents were, the fronts of all the shops were strongly protected by iron bars—such was the dread inspired by the audacious robbers in the vicinity. The man in the blouse, as soon as he entered the street aux Fevès, slackened his gait, for he felt himself at home. The night was dark—the rain was pouring in torrents—the walls were swept by furious winds—the distant clock slowly struck ten. Two females, who were sheltering themselves beneath a dark and projecting door-way, were singing in a low voice some favorite air. One of the creatures was doubtless known to the man, for, stopping suddenly in front of her, he grasped her by the arm: the wretched female, starting back, said in a timid tone, "Good evening, Chourineur."*

The convict had received that name at the bagnio.

"So it's you, Goualeuse,"† said the man; "you must pay for my brandy to-night, or I'll make you dance without a fiddle."

"I have no money," said the woman, shaking with terror before the fear-inspiring villain.

"If your purse is empty, the ogress will trust you on the credit of your face."

"I owe her already for the loan of my clothes."

"You argue, do you?" and he struck his victim a blow so hard as to extort a bitter cry. "Take that—it's only a warning."

The wretch had scarcely spoken these words, when he exclaimed, with an awful oath, "I'm wounded in the arm—you've scratched me with your scissórs!" and he rushed after the girl down the dark alley.

"Dare to come near me," said she, "and I'll stick them into your eyes—I've done you no harm—why did you beat me?"

"I'll tell you soon," said the bandit, approaching her in the dark; "now I have you, and you've got to dance for it," said he, seizing a slender wrist with his muscular hands.

"You'll dance yourself," said a male voice.

"A man! is it you, Red-arm? Answer me, and do not hold me so tight," cried Chourineur. "I'm in your alley, and it must be you."

"'Tis not Red-arm," said the voice.

"If 'tis not a friend, there will be blood spilt," said Chourineur; "but whose small paw is this which I hold?"

"'Tis the mate to this one;" and, though the hand which now seized his throat was soft and delicate, Chourineur soon perceived that it was nerved with iron muscles.

Goualeuse, who had taken refuge in the lower part of the alley, now approached, and cried out to her unknown protector, "O sir, I thank you for defending me—Chourineur abused me because I would not provide him with brandy. I have revenged myself, although I could not hurt him much, with my small scissors. I am now safe, leave him alone—beware! 'tis Chourineur."

How much terror the man inspired!

"Do you not hear me? I tell you 'tis Chourineur."

"I am a man that is fearless!" exclaimed the unknown, and silence reigned, until it was broken by voices of strife.

"You are ambitious of being killed by me, are you?" exclaimed the ruffian, struggling to clear himself from the grasp of his adversary, whom he found armed with gigantic strength; "very well: you shall pay for both Goualeuse and yourself," added he, grinding his teeth.

"Pay! 'twill be in blows, then," replied the unknown.

"Release me, or I will bite off your noso," muttered Chourineur in a smothered growl.

"My nose is too small for you to see, my friend."

"Come under the lamp then."

"Agreed," said the unknown; "we shall then see the whites of each others eyes;" and rushing upon Chourineur, whom he still held by the collar, he forced him back to the entrance of the alley, and sent him violently into the street, where the light of the lamp feebly shone. The ruffian stumbled, but quickly rose and rushed furiously upon the stranger, whose delicate figure did not indicate the incredible strength he displayed. Although Chourineur had a most athletic form and was highly skilled in a sort of exercise called *savate*, which consists in tripping up your antagonist, he had now found his master. The stranger, with singular dexterity, passed one leg behind him and prostrated him twice to the earth. Unwilling to acknowledge his adversary's superiority, Chourineur renewed the struggle, roaring with anger. Goualeuse's champion suddenly changed his manner of attack; he discharged on Chourineur's head a shower of blows, like blows from an iron gauntlet, so entirely opposed to all the rules of the *savate*, as completely to bewilder Chourineur and prostrate him for a third time on the pavement, exclaiming as he fell, "enough, enough, I am beaten."

"If he owns conquered, spare him," said Goualeuse, who, during the conflict, had approached to the threshold of Redman's house; "but who are you?" continued she in a voice of surprise and admiration; "not a man, from the Rue Saint Eloi to Notre Dame, is a match for Chourineur, except the Schoolmaster* alone. I owe you, sir, a thousand thanks; without your kind aid he would have killed me."

The stranger replied not, but listened eagerly to her musical voice. Never had a more silvery sound greeted his ear. He longed to catch a glimpse of her features, but in vain; the night was too dark, the lamp too dim. After having remained motionless for several minutes, Chourineur began gradually to move his legs, his arms, and finally assumed an upright posture.

"Beware!" cried Goualeuse, retreating into the alley, and drawing her protector with her, "beware! he will seek revenge."

"Be assured, my dear girl, if he is in need of more, I can serve him."

The ruffian heard these words: "I am pretty well bruised," muttered he, "I have enough for one day, I want no more at present; suppose we defer it till we meet again."

"Are you not satisfied? Do you complain? Did I not show you fair play?" asked the stranger in a threatening voice.

"O no, I've no fault to find; you are a fellow of good pluck," said the ruffian in a surly voice, but with that deferential manner which is always yielded by men of his class to superiority of bodily strength; "you have flogged me well, and except the Schoolmaster, who could swallow Hercules for his breakfast, no man till to-day could boast of flooring me."

"Well! what now?"

"What now? why I've found my master, that's all, and you will find yours some day or other. Sooner or later, every one finds his master; if not on earth, there's a God above us the priests say. What's certain now is, that you have flogged Chourineur, and therefore you may do what you please in the *Cité*—all the girls will be your slaves, ogres and ogresses will not dare to refuse you tick. Who are you? you speak our slang like a veteran; if you are a thief, I am no man for you. I never stole; I own I have stabbed, for when the blood rushes to my head every thing looks red, and I must strike, but I've paid for it—fifteen years in the bagnio—my time is out now, I owe nothing to the judges, and I never robbed: ask Goualeuse?"

* *Le Chourineur*—the stabber; a nick-name, which the bandits had given him.
† *La Goualeuse*—the songstress.

* The name which had been given to one of the bandits.

"'T is true, he is not a thief," said she.

"Well, come with me; we will drink a glass of brandy together, and you shall know me," said the stranger; "come on, cherish no ill-will."

"That's very kind; you are my master; I grant you play very hard with your fists: I remember that shower of blows. Ah! how they rained upon my sconce; never have I seen anything like it; how well laid on they were, just like a blacksmith's hammer: it is a new game, you must show it to me."

"I will commence again when you wish it."

"Not on me, I thank you; I've not got over the other dose yet. But do you know Red-arm! you were in the alley of his house!"

"Red-arm!" said the unknown, surprised at the question. "I know not whom you mean! Does Red-arm live alone in that house?"

"Certainly not; but Red-arm does not relish neighbors near him," said Chourineur with a peculiar grin.

"Well, so much the better for him," said the stranger, not wishing to continue the conversation. "Red-arm is as much a stranger to me as black-arm. It was raining, and I took shelter in that alley. You were disposed to abuse this poor girl, and I clogged you for it; that is all."

"True: besides, I have nothing to do with your business. Those who need Red-arm, do not tell everybody of it: let us speak no more of it." Then turning to Goualeuse, "Upon my word you are a good girl. I gave you a slap and you returned it with your scissors; it is all fair. But what I like in you is, that you did not excite this fellow against me when I gave up. You will come and drink with us; the gentleman treats. By the way, my brave fellow, suppose instead of drinking brandy, we take a supper together at the White Rabbit;—it 's a *tapis-franc*."

"Agreed, I'll pay for the supper. Will you come, Goualeuse?"

"I was quite hungry but a moment since, but I cannot bear a fight. It has destroyed my appetite."

"Bah! your appetite will return when you commence eating," said Chourineur; "besides, the cooking is first rate at the White Rabbit."

The three in perfect harmony, now directed their steps toward the low tavern.

During the fight between Chourineur and the unknown, a coalman of colossal stature, hid in the next alley, had watched the conflict with keen interest, without, however, offering to interfere. When Chourineur, Goualeuse, and the stranger started for the tavern, the coalman followed them.

The bandit and Goualeuse entered first the *tapis-franc*. The stranger was about to follow, when the coalman approached him and whispered in English, with a respectful manner, "My lord, be on your guard." The stranger carelessly shrugged his shoulders and joined his companions. The coalman remained near the door, listening attentively, and occasionally peering through a small space, scratched from the white paint which usually covers the window-panes in those gloomy abodes.

CHAPTER II..... THE OGRESS.

THE "White Rabbit" is situated in the middle of the rue aux Fevès. It occupies the lower floor of a high house, the front of which has only two windows called guillotine windows. Over the door of the passage, whose walls are black, hangs an oblong lantern, from the cracked glasses of which this inscription, in fiery letters, salutes the guest: "*Lodgings for the night to be had here.*" The unknown, Chourineur, and Goualeuse passed into the interior of the hostelry. Fancy a large, low room, with its ceiling soiled and be-smoked, where darkness is rendered visible by the flicker of a miserable lamp, on the white-washed walls of which coarse engravings hang, mingled with curious inscriptions in the slang of thieves; the floor is covered with sand, and a handful of straw serves as a substitute for a carpet at the foot of the bar, which is situated at the right of the door, and underneath the lamp. On each side of the room are six tables with corresponding benches, fastened by one end to the wall; at the end of the room opposite the bar, is a door which leads to the kitchen; at the right of the bar is another, which leads to apologies for beds, where one can pass the night for three sous.

A few words about the ogress and her guests. Her title is Mother *Ponisse*: her business, the superintendence of the bar, the lodgings, and the loan of garments to the frail peripatetics of the streets. The ogress is fat, fair, and forty; with a slight beard on her chin, a masculine voice, muscular arms, large hands, and gives out her commands in the strong voice of authority. Over her cap a red and yellow silk handkerchief is displayed; a thick shawl crosses over her bosom, and is tied behind her waist; her green woolen petticoat is sufficiently short to reveal her wooden *sabots*, crisped in many places by her foot stove, and her flushed complexion indicates that she is a frequent customer at her own bar. The bar is covered with lead, and furnished with tankards encircled with iron, and also with pewter mugs. Three pitchers, in the form and shape of the Emperor himself, adorn a table in the corner, and are filled with a green or red liquor, well known by the name of *parfait amour*, or "consolation." Finally, a large black cat with sparkling eyes crouches close to the ogress, like the presiding demon of the place. By the way of contrast—singular as it may seem to those who have not fathomed the depths of the human heart—a branch of holy laurel, consecrated by the benedictions of priests, and purchased with the blood-stained coin of the ogress, hangs as an amulet over the old-fashioned clock.

Two men, with repulsive features and hairy faces, sit clothed in rags, at one side of the room, mysteriously whispering to each other, while they are sipping the liquor before them, in a state of manifest uneasiness and expectancy. One of them is deadly pale; a dirty Grecian cap is pulled low over his eyebrows, one of his hands is scrupulously concealed, and when he is forced to show it, he does it with great precaution. Further on, by a table, sits a beardless youth of sixteen, with a lead-like complexion, and eyes that have no speculation in them. As he sits smoking a short pipe, which he occasionally removes to sip the brandy and water before him—sprawling against the wall, with both hands in the pockets of his blouse, and his legs stretched upon the bench—he seems an appropriate representative of precocious vice. The other visitors of the *tapis-franc*, are unworthy of particular notice—a gloomy, ferocious, licentious and brutal crew. Such were the inmates of the tavern when the trio entered. As they figure so largely in our narrative, and as their faces are so indicative of their character, a more minute description of them seems to be requisite.

The summit of Chourineur's tall and athletic form was adorned with a plentiful crop of sandy hair, and bushy whiskers of brilliant red. His miserable situation and laborious pursuits in the bagnio, had imparted to his complexion that brazen hue, which is peculiar to galley slaves. The man's features were rather bold than fierce, although the back part of his skull indicated the lowest and the most ungovernable passions. He is clad in an old blue blouse, coarse velvet pantaloons, which were once green: their discoloration, however, is concealed by a thick covering of mud.

Strange as it may appear, an expression, so mild and angel-like, beamed from the countenance of Goualeuse, that it seemed to defy the effacing finger of degradation; as if the creature had no power to impart the dark lineaments of vice to a face which had been once lighted up by the Creator. Sixteen summers had hardly impressed upon her form the finished touch of womanhood. An oval face, whose round and well-formed cheeks bore the peach-like bloom of tender youth, was surmounted by a Parian brow, beneath which shone mild blue orbs, almost veiled by long and curved lashes; while her small delicate mouth, the symmetry of her nose, and the dimples which nestled in her chin, would have realized the sculptor's brightest dream of beauty. Profuse locks of auburn hair falling from each side of her peerless brow, gracefully swept her cheeks, and curling behind her pearl-like ear, were finally lost under the folds of a plaid handkerchief, twisted around her head in bewitching *marmotte* form. A coral necklace relieved the snowy whiteness of her neck; a worsted dress, though much too large, could not conceal the swell of her round and perfect form; an orange-colored shawl, with fringes of green, crossed gracefully over her bosom. The magic of Goualeuse's voice struck with admiration her unknown protector. Those sweet tones of melody possessed an attraction so irresistible, that the gross and abandoned ruffians in whose midst this rare flower had bloomed, softened and subdued by its melting strains, had given her the name of Goualeuse—"the songstress." She had acquired also, by the innocence of her looks, another name: she was called *Fleur de Marie*, words which, in their language, signify the "purity of maidenhood." Can the reader sympathize with my emotion, that a vocabulary, in which murder, blood and theft are expressed by words more hideous than the things themselves, contains also an image so beautiful and poetical as this "Fleur de Marie"—like a spotless lily, lifting its snow-like and fragrant head from a field of carnage! Singular contrast! expressions of the finest poetry, in a language which belongs to the vilest of men. It almost induces one to believe that certain moral truths throw a fitful but vivid light into the darkest souls—a man totally depraved is a miracle.

The protector of Goualeuse (we will call him Rodolphe,) was about thirty years of age. His slight form did not indicate the

strength which he had displayed; in its beautiful and finished proportions, lay concealed that immense muscular activity which had vanquished the athletic Chourineur. It is difficult to assign a decided character to his countenance, for it exhibited the strangest contradictions. His features were effeminately beautiful, his complexion pale and delicate, while his half-closed, dark and voluptuous eye, surrounded by a bluish circle; his nonchalant gait, his glance of disdain, his ironical smile, seemed to indicate habits of opulence and aristocratic excess. Yet that small white hand had prostrated one of the most formidable bullies of Paris. Certain lines on the brow of Rodolphe, might reveal the thoughtful character of a contemplative man; yet the compressed lip, the bold and imperious bearing, were stronger indications that he was a man of intrepid action and irresistible energy. When melancholy emotions predominated in his bosom, his face was the picture of generosity and benevolence; under the sway of different sentiments, his countenance became cruel, repulsive and disdainful. The sequel will show what association occasioned expressions so opposed to each other. During his struggle with Chourineur he had evinced neither hostility nor anger; confident in his own skill and agility, he felt nothing but contempt for the brute he had vanquished. We will merely add, that his hair and well arched eyebrows were of a light brown color, and that a small mustache darkened his upper lip, while his chin was shaved with scrupulous neatness. As Rodolphe affected, with admirable ease, the language and manners of the habituated guests; as a black silk handkerchief concealed the chiseled proportions of his neck; as his blouse was blue and well worn, and his shoes coarse and heavy, nothing but the aristocratic whiteness of his hands, distinguished him from the ordinary inmates of the *tapis-franc*; but he was immeasurably removed from them, by his air of dauntless resolution and serene courage.

When our party first entered the room, Chourineur, placing one of his bony hands on Rodolphe's shoulders, exclaimed, "Give fitting welcome, my friends, to the vanquisher of Chourineur; this man has this moment flogged me. Beware, ye amateurs, who fancy a broken back and a cracked head. The Schoolmaster will now find his match." From the ogress to the meanest of her guests, glances of admiration and awe were cast upon the conqueror. Some removed their goblets and tankards, to make room for Rodolphe in their own neighborhood; others approached Chourineur, and solicited more particular information about the stranger, who had commenced his life by such a glorious achievement. The ogress herself cast upon Rodolphe one of her sweetest smiles—a courtesy which was unexampled in the annals of the White Rabbit; she even left the bar, approached near to the hero, and asked him, "What should be served to his company?" a tribute of respect which she had never yielded to the Schoolmaster himself—the terrible arch-villain before whom even Chourineur trembled.

The man with the pale and sinister aspect, whose hand was carefully concealed, now leaned toward the ogress, who was wiping the table where Rodolphe was seated, and asked her, in a hoarse voice—

"Has the Schoolmaster been here to-day?"

"No."

"Nor yesterday?"

"Yes."

"With his new woman?"

"Do you take me for a spy? Do you think I betray my customers?" asked the ogress, in an angry tone.

"I am to meet the Schoolmaster to-night," said the ruffian; "we have business together."

"Your business! It must be something nice; a crowd of cut-throats, all of you!"

"Cut-throats!" repeated the ruffian, with angry looks; "who supports *you*, who feeds you, who clothes you but cut-throats?"

"Cease, and mind your own business," said the ogress, raising over his head, in a threatening manner, a pitcher of wine.

The man returned growling to his seat.

When Fleur de Marie passed the threshold, she had exchanged friendly greetings with the dissipated youth to whom we have alluded. Chourineur now addressed the young man—

"Do you always drink brandy and water, Barbillon?"

"Invariably: I had rather play the turtle,* and wear *philosophers*† on my feet, than be without brandy in my stomach, and tobacco in my pipe," replied the youth, in a cracked voice, without changing his position, and puffing from his mouth clouds of smoke.

"Good evening, Mother Ponisse," said Goualeuse.

"Good evening, Fleur de Marie," replied the ogress, inspecting the garments the unfortunate girl had hired.

"It is a pleasure to lend clothes to you," said she, in a gruff but satisfied tone; "you are neat as a kitten. I never would have trusted that beautiful orange-colored shawl to those low creatures, *Tourneuse* and *Tete de Mort*.* I must do *you* the justice to say, that not a better girl lives in the *Cité*."

Goualeuse cast her head down, not appearing excessively elated by the compliments of the ogress.

"I observe you have holy laurel over the clock, Mother Ponisse," said Rodolphe, pointing to the amulet over the timepiece.

"Well! what of that? Would you have us neglect our religious duties, and live like heathen?" said the woman, with pious complacency.

"Are you not going to sing, Fleur de Marie?" asked the ogress.

"After supper," said Chourineur.

"What shall I serve you with, my brave fellow?" said the ogress to Rodolphe, whose favor she seemed anxious to win, and whose assistance she might require.

"Ask Chourineur, mother, he orders the feast, and I pay for it."

"Well, what will you have for supper, you ugly dog?"

"Two pints of wine," said Chourineur, meditating on the composition of the entertainment, "an *arlequin*,† and three rolls exceedingly fresh."

"I see," said the ogress, "that you are as great an eater as ever, and that you still have a passion for arlequins."

"Are you hungry, Goualeuse?"

"No, Chourineur."

"Would you not prefer something more delicate than the arlequin, my dear girl?" asked Rodolphe.

"O no, my appetite has all gone."

"But just see my master," said Chourineur, indicating Rodolphe by his glance; "are you afraid to look at him?"

The poor girl blushed, and cast down her eyes in silence.

The ogress now appeared with a stock of wine, a loaf of bread, and the arlequin, which it is vain to attempt to describe. It was pronounced faultless by the fastidious Chourineur; who exclaimed, with glistening eyes and great internal satisfaction, "What a dish! Ye gods, what a delicious dish! It should be called an omnibus: here is a morsel for every palate—for those who like fat, and those that like lean—for those fond of sugar, and those fond of pepper—chicken drumsticks, fishes' tails, mutton-chop bones, pie-crust, fried potatoes, cheese, vegetables, woodcocks' heads, crackers and salad—eat, Goualeuse; it is so nice," said he, enforcing his precept by swallowing huge quantities; "why don't you eat? you must have been to a wedding."

"A wedding! No, indeed; I ate this morning, as usual, my pennyworth of milk and my pennyworth of bread."

A new arrival interrupted the conversation for a while. The whole company turned to gaze. He was a man of middle age, straight and robust, dressed in a round jacket and cap, and seemed perfectly *au fait* with the usages of the *tapis-franc*; and ordered his supper in the familiar language of the inmates. Although the stranger was not one of the habitual guests of the White Rabbit, he soon ceased to attract attention. His character was well known, for villains, like honest men, have signs by which they distinguish their peers. The new-comer placed himself in such a position, as to watch the two individuals with the sinister aspect, and, at the same time, conceal from them that they were the objects of his scrutiny.

In spite of Chourineur's audacity, he had a sort of respect for Rodolphe; he dare not address him in familiar style. Although he feared not the laws, he feared might.

"Upon my word," said he to Rodolphe, resuming the conversation, "although I have been so thoroughly drubbed, I am glad to have met with you."

"Because you find the arlequin to your taste?"

"That 's true; but I burn to see you thrash the Schoolmaster. To see him thoroughly beaten, will be more delicious than the arlequin."

"Do you suppose, that for your amusement I am going to rush, like a bull-dog, on such a ferocious and formidable villain as the Schoolmaster?"

"No; but he will rush on you, when I tell him that you are stronger than he," said Chourineur, rubbing his hands together in great ecstacy.

"I have change enough left to give him his due," said Rodolphe, with great indifference. "The storm still rages," continued he; "suppose we call for some brandy and water—it may draw from Goualeuse a song."

"That's what I like," said Chourineur.

"And to strengthen our acquaintance, suppose we relate our histories to each other."

* That is—go without food.

† Slippers.

* The nick-names of two other girls.

† An *arlequin* is a dish made up of all sorts of eatables—remnants from the tables of the servants belonging to rich families.

"L'Albinos is my name," said Chourineur. "A liberated convict—wood-carrier at the quay Saint Paul—frozen in winter, roasted in summer. Such is my history," said he, touching his hat to Rodolphe in military salutation. "But you, my master," added he, "this is the first time you have been seen in the *Cité*; which is no reproach, for when you did come, you entered it like a hero discharging your artillery at my head, and beating a drum on my skin. Ye gods! what a rolling! I hear the echo yet—I never shall forget it. But surely, you do something else besides flog Chourineur?"

"I am a fan-painter, and my name is Rodolphe."

"Fan-painter! that's what makes your hands so white. If all your comrades are like yourself, that business must require great strength. But since you are a working-man, and undoubtedly an honest one, why do you come to a *tapis-franc*, where none are found but thieves, murderers, and liberated convicts, who cannot go elsewhere?"

"I am fond of good company."

"Ahem! ahem!" said Chourineur, shaking his head in doubt. "I found you in Red-arm's alley."

"Are you going to bore me for ever with your infernal Red-arm? Go to the devil with him!"

"Ahem! Perhaps you mistrust me, master, and not without reason either; but if you please, I will tell you my life, on condition that you teach me those blows which gave the finishing touch to my flogging."

"Agreed. You tell me your life, and Goualeuse will tell hers."

"All right," said Chourineur. "In such weather, not even a constable should go out-doors. Will you tell your history, Goualeuse?"

"It is a very short one," said Fleur de Marie.

"And you will tell yours, master?" said Chourineur.

"Fan-painter!" said Goualeuse; "that is a very pretty trade."

"How much do you earn by that sort of work?" asked Chourineur.

"I work by the job. A good day's work yields me four francs; sometimes five, in summer, when the days are long."

"And you loaf after that, you rogue!"

"Yes, while I have money. I spend six sous for my lodging——"

"Excuse me, my lord," interrupted Chourineur. "Six sous! did I understand you aright?" said he, touching his cap with the back of his hand.

The words "my lord," spoken ironically by Chourineur, forced a smile from Rodolphe.

"O, I am very particular," said he. "I am fond of my ease, and cannot bear dirt."

"You must be a real peer of France! a banker! a rich fellow! Why, he lodges for six sous, Goualeuse!"

"Add to that," continued Rodolphe, "four sous for tobacco, which makes ten sous; four sous for my breakfast, fourteen; fifteen sous for my dinner, one or two sous for my brandy and water, which makes thirty sous a-day. I am not obliged to work all the week: the remainder of the time I enjoy myself."

"And your family?" asked Goualeuse.

"The cholera killed them," said Rodolphe.

"What business did your parents follow?"

"They were venders of old clothes and traders in old rags in the market-place."

"How much did you dispose of their stock for?" asked Chourineur.

"My guardian sold it—I was too young. He cheated me out of the whole of it, and brought me in his debtor thirty francs—that was all my patrimony."

"And who is your employer now?"

"Borel. He lives in rue Bourdonnais—an ass, a thief, and a miser; he had rather part with an eye than pay his workmen. Should you meet him going to the devil, hurry him on, never turn him back. I was his apprentice from the age of fifteen. I escaped being a conscript by drawing a fortunate number, and I live in the rue Triverie, fourth story, front. My name is Rodolphe Durand. You have heard my history."

"Now is your turn, Goualeuse," said Chourineur. "I reserve my history for the dessert."

CHAPTER III. ..... HISTORY OF GOUALEUSE.

"COMMENCE at the beginning," said Chourineur.

"Yes," added Rodolphe. "Your parents!"

"I never knew them," said Fleur de Marie.

"Indeed," said Chourineur. "Never seen nor known them—born under a cabbage, as foundlings are. You and I belong to the same family, Goualeuse."

"You, Chourineur?"

"I was picked up from the pavement, my girl."

"And who brought you up, Goualeuse?" asked Rodolphe.

"That I do not know. When I was seven or eight years old, I found myself under the protection of an old woman, called Chouette, (night owl,) because she had only one eye, which was green and quite round, and a hooked nose."

"Methinks I see her," said Chourineur, laughing.

"The one-eyed woman," continued Fleur de Marie, "sent me evenings to sell candy on the Pont Neuf, as an apology for begging; and when I did not bring back ten sous, she would give me a whipping instead of my supper."

"I understand," said Chourineur; "a kick for a piece of bread, and a few cuffs to spread over it."

"Indeed, it was just so."

"But are you sure she was not your mother?" asked Rodolphe.

"I am quite sure, for Chouette often reproached me with being an orphan, and told me she had picked me up from the streets."

"With a thrashing as the *eating* part of your supper, pray what did you drink?" asked Chourineur.

"A glass of water; and then I crept into a miserable hole and slept on straw. Now, people think that straw is warm; but I found it very cold."

"Straw!" cried Chourineur; "you are right my darling, straw is regular hoar-frost; manure is a hundred times warmer, but it is low, decidedly low, and people are too proud to use it."

Fleur de Marie smiled as she proceeded: "In the morning, the one-eyed one gave me the same for my breakfast, which she had given me for my supper; and I used to go to Montfaucon, to pick up angle-worms as bate for fish; for Chouette hired out fishing-lines under Notre Dame bridge. For a child of seven years old, fainting with hunger, it is quite a long walk, I tell you, from the rue Mortellerie to Montfaucon."

"You should not complain of that, my dear," said Chourineur, lighting his pipe; "the exercise has made you as straight as a rod."

"I would return tired to death, with a basket full of worms, and about noon, Chouette would give me a large piece of bread: I did not lose the crumbs, I assure you."

"Eating but little, has made you as slender as a wasp; you must not complain of that," said the consolatory Chourineur, blowing out tobacco smoke. "But what ails you, my friend Rodolphe, I mean my master, you are sad: does the misery which the little girl suffered affect you! bah! we have all seen misery."

"You were never so miserable, Chourineur, as I have been," said Fleur de Marie.

"Your life was that of a queen, compared with mine," said Chourineur; "you ate bread and slept on straw, but I slept in the plaster-kiln and fed on cabbage-leaves, which I found in the street; but as it was so far to the kiln I grew lame, and was compelled to sleep under the big stones in the Louvre, where I had a glorious white sheet over me when it snowed."

"A man with all his strength," said Goualeuse, "can endure much; but a poor little girl, weak as a lark—— "

"Weak! were you? do you remember that?"

"O yes; for when I used to fall with the first blow that Chouette gave me, she used to say 'the little beggar has not the strength of a flea, she can't bear a cuff;' and she called me 'Pegriotte,' (a small bird,) I had no other name, and thus was I baptized with blows."

"Just so with me," said Chourineur; "I had no name, men called me as they do a stray dog, by any name which comes into their head. It is astonishing how much our histories are alike."

"Very true," said Fleur de Marie, who addressed nearly all her conversation to Chourineur, feeling a sort of shame in the presence of Rodolphe; she dared not raise her eyes to meet his own, although he seemed to belong to the same class with which she was herself familiar.

"Well, when you brought back angle-worms for Chouette, what did you do then?" asked Chourineur.

"She would send me to beg until night, at which time she used to fry meat on the Pont Neuf. By this hour nothing remained of my piece of bread, but wo to me if I ventured to ask Chouette for 'more;' only blows were given me, and I was told to get my ten sous by begging, or I should have no supper. Alas! the hunger and blows drew such floods of tears from my eyes! Chouette would hang the little platter of candy around my neck and place me on the Pont Neuf. How my heart would sob! how I shivered with cold! how I was gnawed with hunger."

"Just like me again," said Chourineur; "the rich won't believe it, but hunger makes one shiver almost as much as cold."

"I would stay on the Pont Neuf till eleven o'clock, with my candy platter hanging from my neck, weeping all the time. My tears often moved the passers-by, and at times they would give

me ten, twelve, and even fifteen sous, which I would give to Chouette."

"A fine evening's work for such a little bird as you."

"But the one-eyed one perceiving that——"

"With her one eye?" said Chourineur, laughing.

"With her one eye, if you please—for she had but one—the one-eyed one perceiving that my tears moved the pity of the passers-by, had the cunning to beat me harder before she placed me on the Pont Neuf, that my tears might extort from their compassion larger sums."

"That was not so foolish, after all."

"You think so, do you, Chourineur? Well, I finally became so hardened to blows, that when I saw Chouette was mad if I did not cry, to revenge myself upon her, the more she whipped me the more I would laugh; and at night, instead of crying while I was selling my candy, I used to sing like a wild-bird; although I did not feel much like singing, I assure you."

"The candy must have excited your appetite, Goualeuse."

"It did, but I never touched it; that was my ambition, and it was this ambition of mine which ruined me, as you will see presently. As I was returning one day from gathering worms, some wicked boys beat me, and robbed me of my basket. I went home, and I knew what I must expect. I received a whipping, but no bread. At night, before I went to the bridge, the hag, angry because I had sold nothing the night before, did not beat me as usual to make me cry, but commenced pulling out my hair by the handful, from the part of the head where it is the tenderest."

"By thunder and blood!" cried the bandit, highly excited, and striking the table violently with his fist, "*that* is too bad: to beat a child will do, but to *torture* her is inhuman."

Rodolphe, who had listened with the most eager interest to Fleur de Marie's narrative, was astonished that any tale of woe could reach the sensibility of one so hardened as Chourineur.

"What's the matter with you, Chourineur?" said he.

"Matter forsooth! if you are not moved, that an old green-eyed hag should torture this poor child, your heart must be as hard as your fists."

"Go on, go on," said Rodolphe, taking no notice of Chourineur's observation.

"Chouette tortured me to make me cry, as I was saying; so to vex her, I began to laugh, and went away singing to sell my candies on the bridge. The one-eyed one was also there with her frying-pan, and now and then would shake her clenched fist at me; but the louder I laughed and the merrier I sang, although I was almost famished with hunger. For six months, I had not sold one piece of candy, yet never had I tasted of it; but on that day I could restrain myself no longer. More through hunger than to vex Chouette, I took one piece of candy and ate it up."

"Bravo! my girl," said Chourineur.

"I ate two."

"Vive la charte!" sang Chourineur.

"Upon my word I liked them much; but now an orange-woman saw me, and cried out to Chouette, 'Pegriotte is eating up your candy.'"

"By Heaven!" said Chourineur excited, "it's growing warm; it's growing warmer: poor little mouse, how you must have trembled!"

"Ah! me," said Fleur de Marie, "it went hard with me, but the amusing part of it was, that Chouette, though mad with rage, could not leave her frying-pan, for the butter was boiling hot."

"Sure enough, sure enough," said Chourineur laughing; "the situation was perplexing."

"While thinking of the blows that were preparing for me, I said to myself, 'it is all over with me now; she will beat me no more for three than for one.' I then seized a third stick, and while she was shaking at me in a threatning manner her long fork; as true as I am here, I showed to her the stick of candy, and ate it before her face."

"Bravo! I admire your spirit, my dear girl; but Chouette must have flayed you alive after such a trick."

"Having finished frying her meat, she came directly to me. I had earned by begging three sous; I had ate up the price of six sous. When Chouette took me by the hand, to lead me home, I thought I should sink to the pavement through fear. I remember it as if 't was yesterday; 't was about the first of the year. At that season, you know, toy-shops abounded on the Pont Neuf. For the whole evening my eyes were dazzled with those toys. Fancy how I must have felt while gazing on those beautiful dolls and gaudy toys."

"But did *you* ever have any toys?"

"How foolish you are! who would give *me* toys?" It was cold, bitter cold! I had no clothing on but a thin cotton frock, no stockings within my rough sabots, but the sweat rolled from my brows. What was most fearful was, that Chouette uttered not one reproach, but only muttered some words between her teeth. She held me tight by the hand, and pulled me so fast that I was forced to run. While running I lost one of my shoes, but I did not stop to tell her. I followed her with one foot bare: when we reached home 't was covered with blood."

"The ugly old devil!" exclaimed Chourineur, striking the table once more. "It makes me fierce as a bull dog to think of the little child trotting after the old thief, tracking the way with her blood."

"We lived in a garret in the rue Mortellerie; a grog-shop was near, Chouette entered it and drank a goblet-ful of brandy.

"The devil she did! I could not drink as much myself without being slightly drunk."

"That was her ordinary dram, she never went to bed sober. At length we went up-stairs; I was frightened, I assure you. Chouette locks the door. On my knees I pray her to forgive my offence. She answered me not, but I heard her muttering while she walked the room: 'How shall I punish this young thief? what shall I do with the robber?' looking at me and rolling her green eye. Suddenly she went to the shelf and took from it a pair of pinchers."

"Pinchers!" exclaimed Chourineur.

"Yes, pinchers."

"What for? to strike you with?" asked Rodolphe

"O no, indeed."

"To pull out your hair?"

"No, you cannot guess."

"We give up."

"'T was to pull a tooth from my jaw."

Chourineur uttered such a horrible oath, followed by such violent imprecations, that every guest in the *tapis-franc* turned toward him in amazement.

"What ails you?" asked Goualeuse.

"Ails me! I'll cut the throat of the one-eyed devil. Where is she?" and the blood rushed to the bandit's head.

Rodolphe shared Chourineur's horror at the fiendish cruelty of the hag; and was also seeking for a solution of the question, why Chourineur, himself an assassin, should become so infuriated at a kindred propensity in another.

We believe that the sentiment of pity has sufficient vitality to spring up in the hard and stony soil of the most ferocious heart.

"And did the horrid old hag pull out your tooth, my poor little one?" asked Rodolphe.

"Indeed she did, but not at the first pull. She worked, and wrenched, and twisted, holding my head between her knees as in a vice, and partly with the pinchers and partly with her fingers, pulled out the tooth. 'I'll pull out one like this every day,' said she; 'and when they are all gone, I'll throw you into the river, that the fish may devour you for providing worms to catch them.' I remember this, because it seemed to me so unjust, as if I sought worms to gratify myself."

"The infernal woman! to pull a tooth from that poor child's head," said Chourineur, with redoubled rage.

"Can you discern the loss of it?" said Fleur de Marie, smiling, as she parted her rosy lips, fit portals of a voice which streamed forth in melody, and displayed two full rows of even and pearl-white teeth.

"Is it carelessness, forgetfulness, instinctive generosity, or the nature of this unfortunate girl," Rodolphe asked himself, "that, during the whole narrative, she does not breathe one thought of hatred, one word of imprecation, against the atrocious wretch who has inflicted such cruel agony upon her?"

"Well, what did you after that?" said Chourineur.

"The next day, instead of gathering worms, I ran away in the direction of the Pantheon. In such fear was I of Chouette, that I walked all the day. I would have gone to the ends of the earth rather than have returned, such awful dread of her possessed me. I found myself in streets which were unfamiliar to me. I met with none from whom I could ask alms; I did not dare to do so. When night came on, I crept into a wood-yard and slept; and as the wind howled and the rain poured down in floods, I sheltered myself beneath a heap of bark. I tried to eat some bark to cheat my hunger, but I could not swallow it; I soon found, however, a birch log, the bark of which was tenderer. Sleep now comforted my misery. By daylight I heard a noise, and crept further under the wood-pile. It was almost as warm as a cellar; and if I only had had something to eat, I could not have been better accommodated for the winter."

"Just so with me in my plaster-kiln," said Chourineur.

"I had not the courage to leave the wood-yard. I feared that Chouette was on the watch for me, to pull out my teeth, and throw me to the fishes."

"Don't mention that hag any more; it sends the blood to my eyes."

"The second day, after eating a little bark, I felt sleepy again; but I soon heard the baying of a large dog. I listened in fear. Nearer and nearer it came; but happily for me, the dog, though large and fierce, I know not why, dared not approach me. But you are laughing at me, Chourineur."

"I smile because you are such a brave girl," said he; "and upon my word, I am sorry that I beat you."

"Why should you not beat me? I have no one to protect me."

"You have me," said Rodolphe.

"You are very kind, Mr. Rodolphe; but Chourineur did not expect you, neither did I."

"I say I am sorry for having done it," repeated Chourineur. "Proceed with your history, my child."

"While the dog was barking, a rough voice began to say, 'My dog barks; some one must be concealed in the yard;' and I heard them whistle to excite the dog. The dog ran to me, and fearing he would bite, I screamed with all my remaining strength. 'Hallo!' said the voice, 'it sounds like a child.' They brought a lantern, drew me from the hole, and I found myself in the presence of a large man and a boy. 'What are you doing in my wood-yard, you little thief?' said the man, with an angry look. 'My good sir,' said I, 'I have eaten nothing for two days. I ran away from Chouette, who wished to pull out my teeth and throw me to the fishes. Having nowhere to go, I sheltered myself beneath the wood-pile, thinking I was doing no harm.' But the big man, turning to the boy, said: 'She cannot cheat me in that way. She's a little thief, and came here to steal my wood.'"

"The old fool! the old jackass!" said Chourineur. "How could a girl only eight years old steal his wood!"

"'T was foolish enough," said Fleur de Marie; "for his own boy said to him, 'What! steal your wood, master! She is not as big as your smallest log.' 'She has confederates,' replied the man. 'Thieves keep children of this description to peer about as spies, and open the gates. I shall take her to the police.'"

"What an ass the woodman was!"

"They took me to the magistrate. I told my story. I accused myself of being a vagrant; and for that confession, I was sentenced to remain in the House of Correction until I was sixteen years of age. I was obliged to the judge for his kindness. Prison was a paradise compared to Chouette's. I had something to eat, and I was not beaten. Besides, I learned to sew in prison. But I was an idler, I liked singing so much better than work; and oh! when I saw the sun, when it poured its bright warm rays into the prison-yard, I could not restrain my voice; and when my soul went forth in song, (how singular it was!) I forgot that I was a prisoner."

"You were a nightingale by birth," said Rodolphe.

"Thank you. From that time I was called Goualeuse, instead of Pegriotte. At length the time arrived when I was to leave the prison. As I went out, I found the ogress at the door, and with her two or three old women, who had from time to time visited my fellow-prisoners, and who had told them that when I should leave the prison they would give me a home."

"O ho! I comprehend," said Chourineur.

"'My darling! my angel! my beautiful little one!' said the ogress to me, 'come to my house. I will give you fine clothes, delicious food: you will have nothing to do but enjoy yourself.' One does not live eight years in prison without learning something: I drove the old hags away. 'I can sew,' said I to myself; 'I have youth, health, strength, and three hundred francs which I have earned. I have been shut up within a prison for eight years: let me now enjoy life and see the world: work will come when my money is gone;' and I began to be very lavish with my three hundred francs. Alas! that was very wrong. I ought to have worked first, and saved my money; but I had none to advise me, and my error cannot now be redeemed by sighs. I have a perfect passion for flowers: I purchased the most beautiful bouquets, and adorned my small room with them. I was very extravagant; for I bought a fine shawl and an elegant dress, and used to ride to the Bois de Boulogne and Saint Germain on a donkey."

"With a lover!" asked Chourineur.

"No, indeed! I wished to be my own mistress. I rode with a prison acquaintance, a foundling, of the same ward with myself; a very good girl, called Rigolette, because she laughed incessantly."

"Rigolette! Rigolette! Do I know her?" said Chourineur.

"No, you do not. Rigolette is an industrious and honest girl: she earns twenty-five sous a-day, and has one of the prettiest little rooms, furnished by herself. Alas! I dare not go and see her now. At last my money was nearly gone: I had but forty-three francs left."

"You should have purchased a jeweller's stock with it," said Chourineur.

"I did better than that," said Fleur de Marie, with glistening eyes. "A poor laundress whom I employed—an excellent creature—was about to become a mother, but was, notwithstanding, forced to work all day long in the wet washing-boat;* being compelled to relinquish her occupation, she prayed to be admitted into the hospital. There was no vacancy; she could not be admitted; she was pining with suffering and want: without bread, without money, and without a lodging, the pangs of labor seized her. Fortunately she met with Goubin's wife, who had been hiding in a cellar back of the Hotel Dieu, for fear her husband would kill her By night she wandered forth in search of food, and thus met with poor Lorraine. Goubin's wife conducted her to the cellar, where at least there was shelter."

"Goubin's wife! Goubin's wife: her name is Helmina," said Chourineur.

"She gave to Lorraine her cellar, her food, and her own miserable bed; and there the poor infant was born. At the risk of losing her own life, Goubin's wife rushed to me for aid. I had a few francs left. At the very moment I was getting into a cab, with Rigolette, to spend all the money I had left by a jaunt to the country—I do admire the country! the fields, the trees, the birds, and above all, the flowers—I heard of Lorraine's distress. I sent away the cab, went to my room, placed my mattress, clothes and blankets on a porter's back, and hurried with them to the cellar of Goubin's wife. How happy was poor Lorraine! We nursed her together. I assisted her with the remainder of my money; and when she recovered, she returned to her washing-boat. Now, she earns her bread; but she will never give me my washing-bills—she wishes to pay me by her labor: but if she persists, I shall no longer patronise her," said Goualeuse, with an important air.

"But what has become of Goubin's wife!"

"Miserable woman! her husband met her, gave her three stabs between the shoulders, and she expired."

"That explains all," said Chourineur; "he has been sentenced to death, and will be executed in a week."

"After giving your money to Lorraine, what did you then do, my poor girl!" asked Rodolphe.

"I went in search of work: I entered a clothing-shop in the rue Saint Martin, told the master I had just left the prison, and wished employment. I asked to take some work home with me. He inquired if I was jesting; said he would not trust me with a pincushion, and pushed me out of the door. As I was returning, sad and miserable, I met the ogress, and another old woman. They had been seeking me ever since I left the prison. I knew not where to go—how to live. They took me to this house—gave me brandy to drink ——— alas! alas! that is the end!"

"I am well acquainted with you," said Chourineur: "I know you as well as if you were my own child, and had never left my cab. An eventful history, sure enough."

"Has it made you sad to tell your story!" asked Rodolphe.

"It is the first time that I have ever cast my memory back: it is not pleasant, I assure you."

"Bah!" said Chourineur, satirically; "you regret, do you, that you are not a scullion in some pot-house, or the servant of some crusty old brute!"

"I could endure the meanest labor, for the pleasure of being innocent and pure," said Fleur de Marie.

"Pure!" said Chourineur; "you had better become a vestal at once, and watch the ashes of the parents you have never known."

The young girl's countenance lost all the expression of levity it had previously worn, as she replied: "I am not given to weeping, Chourineur, for the parents who cast me into the street to perish like a dog. I reproach them not: perhaps they had not enough themselves to eat. I can fancy a much happier fate than my own."

"You! what more do you wish for?" said Chourineur: "are you not seventeen; beautiful as a rose; sing like a bird? Are you not our Fleur de Marie? What will you say, when you become as old and ugly as the ogress, and wear, like her, a rusty wig!"

"I shall never like to be of her age."

"Perhaps you will get insured against growing old!"

"I shall not live long; I have a cough already."

"Pshaw! methinks I see you in the dead-car: why do you talk so silly!"

"Have you these thoughts oftentimes?" asked Rodolphe.

"Frequently: perhaps *you*, Mr. Rodolphe, will understand my feelings. When I go in the morning to buy my pennyworth of

* Washing-boats are large boats stationed in the Seine, where may be daily seen two or three hundred, washing the clothes of the city.

milk, from the old milkwoman at the corner of the rue Vieille-Draperie, and watch her, as she is returning home with her wagon and little donkey, I am filled with the bitterest envy. She is going *home*, to breathe the pure air in her own house, among dear friends. I have neither. I must return to darkness and solitude in the garret of the ogress."

"Reform! Reform, then!" said Chourineur.

"Reform! Good God! how *can* I reform? The very clothing that covers my nakedness belongs to the ogress. I owe her for my room, my raiment, my food. I cannot go from her house: she would arrest me as a thief. Alas! I am her property, her slave;" and the tears burst from the poor girl's eyes, and her frame shook with her shuddering.

"Well, then," said Chourineur, scratching his head, "I do not see but you must remain where you are; but don't compare yourself to a country wench: you shine in the city; you live in great and glorious Paris; but the peasant goes back to the miserable country, to spread her lap for dirty babies, milk her cows, pick grass for her rabbits, and receive a beating from her husband when he returns from the grog-shop. That is not what I call an enviable mode of existence."

There was a long silence. "Let us drink, Chourineur," said Fleur de Marie abruptly. "No, no, not wine," continued she, as Rodolphe was passing her a glass; "give me brandy, it is stronger."

"That 's right, that 's right, my darling! wine for girls, but brandy for heroines," said the bandit, who did not observe the tear that hung tremulous on her long curved eyelashes.

"'T is a pity brandy is so disagreeable a drink; it stupefies one quicker than any other," said Fleur de Marie, placing upon the table the beverage, which she had sipped with evident disgust.

Rodolphe had listened to her artless narrative, and now watched her expressive countenance with the intensest interest: abandoned misery, rather than vicious inclination, had ruined a being of a most spiritual and exalted nature.

CHAPTER IV..... HISTORY OF CHOURINEUR.

The reader has not forgotten, that two of the guests of the *tapis-franc* were vigilantly watched by a third individual, who had just arrived. During Goualeuse's narrative, they were frequently whispering to each other and looking in the direction of the door. The man who concealed his hand so scrupulously, now addressed his companion.

"'T is strange the Schoolmaster does not come; who knows but his comrade has killed him, to get the whole of the booty?"

"We should have made a bad job of it, in that case."

The last comer now compared the observations which he had made with a note which he carried in his hat, and with the appearance of satisfaction rose from his seat, and addressing the ogress, who was dosing on a stool, with her feet on a foot-stove and a black cat in her lap, said: "I am coming back presently; take care of my tankard and plate; thieves are not to be trusted."

"Be easy, my friend," said she; "no one would touch a tankard and plate after *you*, empty or full."

The man disappeared with a laugh. As the door opened, Rodolphe perceived that the athletic coalman was still in attendance; and he signified to him by means of gestures his displeasure at such surveillance; but the coalman, notwithstanding, maintained his post.

The brandy which Goualeuse had drank, did not serve to restore her cheerfulness; her countenance became still more sad and plaintive. She leaned inertly against the wall; her head drooped; her eye, lighted by no pleasure or excitement, wandered about mechanically: the poor creature had abandoned herself to the most melancholy contemplations. Two or three times, however, Fleur de Marie, meeting the glance of Rodolphe, involuntarily dropped her eyes, without being able to account for the effect he produced upon her. His presence was an oppression to her restless, disappointed and broken spirit. She reproached herself, for the coldness of her gratitude toward one who had rescued her from the violence of Chourineur. She almost regretted having so ingenuously disclosed her history in Rodolphe's presence.

Chourineur, on the contrary, was in a state of enviable enjoyment. He had singly devoured an entire arlequin; abundance of wine and brandy put to flight all his reserve; the shame of defeat was extinguished by the generosity of his victor. Physical superiority was, in his estimation, an exalted virtue; and his feelings of humiliation were supplanted by fear, admiration and respect. This entire absence of rancor; the frankness with which he admitted his crimes and the justice of his punishment; the haughty pride with which he boasted of his only virtue, honesty; clearly indicated that into the lowest depth of degradation, Chourineur had not yet fallen. These discrepancies had not escaped Rodolphe's attention, and he waited with considerable impatience for the assassin's narrative.

Man's ambition is so strange, so insatiable, so all-grasping and infinite in its aspirations, that Rodolphe was filled with a strong and eager desire for the arrival of the Schoolmaster, that he might add the glory of hurling the terrible tyrant from his throne, to the laurels he had won already, by shaking it. Anxious to relieve the pains of expectation, he urged Chourineur to commence his history.

"You, my poor Goualeuse," he began, "had at least a sort of dog-kennel, which served you as a house until they sent you to prison. I do not remember to have slept in what they call a bed, until I was nineteen years of age; when I became a soldier!"

"Have you been a soldier, Chourineur?"

"You will see by and by. The stones of the Louvre, the kilns of Clichy, the quarries of Montmarte, are the various abodes to which my memory reverts as the home of my youth. The stones were my city residence, the kilns and the quarries my country retreats."

"What was your trade?"

"Well: I have a sort of recollection of having wandered in my youth, with a rag-gatherer, who thrashed me with his hook. I think I cannot be mistaken, for whenever I meet one of those Cupids with his quiver on his back,* I feel my fingers itch to have hold of him: there is no doubt that some of them must have thrashed me in my youth. My first employment was as an assistant to a butcher, in the horse-slaughtering business. I was then twelve years of age. I pitied the poor brutes at first; but I soon conquered my softness of heart, and my trade became a perfect passion. My knives were always so sharp, that I desired to use them of course. After I had killed a horse, a piece of the rump of another that had died sick, was given to me as my reward. The beef of the horses which we slaughtered, were sold to a restaurateur near the School of Medicine; and he manufactured it into lamb, mutton, veal, game, or anything else according to the taste of his customers. When I got possession of my piece of horse, the king was no longer my master. I ran with it to the plaster-kilns, and with the permission of the workmen, broiled over the coals the delicious morsel. When they did not work, I would go and gather sticks, light a fire, and cook my food."

"What was your name?" asked Rodolphe.

"My hair was whiter than it is now, and my eyes blood-shot; and they called me Albinos."

"Your parents? Your family?"

"My parents were near neighbors of Goualeuse's: I was born on the right or left corner of some highway."

"Did you not curse your parents, for having abandoned you?"

"How would that have aided me? They played me a scurvy trick by bringing me into the world; yet I would not have complained, if God had made me as beggars should be made, without hunger, thirst, or feeling: it would cost Him no more, and the beggars much less."

"You have borne hunger and thirst, and yet never *stole*?" asked Rodolphe.

"I never stole: and yet I have suffered much from want. I have sometimes for two days played the turtle; oftener than 't was my turn to fast, I am sure."

"You feared the prison, did you?"

"The prison! I was not deterred from stealing bread by fear of getting bread: honest, I was starving; a thief, I should be fed. No, that was not it: I did not steal, because theft was foreign to my nature."

The reply struck Rodolphe as possessing much beauty; he felt that honesty, among the poor, was a much greater virtue than among the rich; for in addition to the greater degree of temptation they had to endure, the very punishment to which they would be sentenced, would meliorate their condition.

Rodolphe stretched forth his hand to the unhappy bandit, whom misery had not found herself strong enough totally to prostrate and degrade. Chourineur regarded the prompt kindness of his companion with great surprise and gratitude. He dared not grasp the offered hand; he felt that between Rodolphe and himself an awful abyss yawned.

"You have not lost," said Rodolphe, "your heart nor your honor."

"I do not know," said Chourineur, inarticulate with emotion, "what you say. The fact is, I never felt anything like this before,"

* The rag-gatherers of Paris carry a basket between their shoulders, in the manner that Cupid is represented as carrying his quiver.

and his bosom heaved with sobs. "Those last blows of yours were so well planted—and you might have continued hammering me till to-morrow instead of giving me this supper—and you speak such words of kindness to me, words I never heard before—in short, in life or death, you may rely upon Chourineur."

Rodolphe, endeavoring to conceal his own emotion, drew back the attention of his companion to the story: "Did you continue a horse-butcher long?"

"Certainly, at first, I had no relish for the pursuit; I rather pitied the beasts: but when I was about sixteen years of age, and my voice had changed, it became a passion and a rage with me to slaughter. I lost all taste for any other employment. I thought only, dreamt only, of the shambles. You should have seen me at my work; a pair of old trowsers my only dress; my large knife sharp, and shining in my hand; full fifteen horses round me waiting their turn to die. When I began to slay, I know not what possessed me; all that I saw was red; horses and houses, trees, streets and human beings, all were red. My eyes flashed, my ears burned; I slaughtered! slaughtered! till the knife dropped from my hand. O Mars! it was rapture! Had I been a millionaire, I would have sacrificed my fortune for the fun! After I was sixteen, this rage became so strong, that when I began to work madness seized me; I spoiled the flesh, I cut the skins: they were obliged to force me from the trade. I sought employment with other butchers, that trade had always been my taste. But they were proud; I was but a horse-killer, and they discharged me as a shoemaker does a cobbler. My butchering mania gradually subsided, and I sought some other employment. I did not find it, and again was obliged to fast. At last, I worked in the quarries of Montrouge; drawing stone on the main-road for twenty sous per day. I was now tall and strong, and I offered to enlist as a soldier. I was asked my name, my age, and my papers. My name, said I, is Albinos; for my age, look at my beard; and here is my employers' certificate. I was fit to make a fine grenadier, so they took me in."

"With your strength, courage, and passion for stabbing, you might have become an officer, had there been a war."

"Thunder and blood! to have slaughtered Englishmen and Prussians, would have been a rapture that would have been worth whole ages spent in slaughtering horses; but the worst of it was, no war occurred; but military discipline was exercised in all its rigor. If an apprentice tries to flog his master, that is nothing: if he is the stronger, he flogs him; if he is the weaker, he gets flogged. But not so in the army. One day the sergeant pushed me to hasten my movements; he was right, I was too slow; but I was angry, and I rebelled. He pushed again, I pushed back; he seized me by the collar, I sent him a blow with my fist. They all rush upon me; the mania again arouses within me; the blood rushes to my head; all that I see is red. I had been employed in cooking; my knife was in my hand, and I commenced stabbing as if I was in the slaughter-house again. I slew the sergeant, I wounded two soldiers; 'twas a perfect butchery. I distributed among the three eleven clever wounds. Blood! blood! as at the shambles."

The bandit hung down his head and meditated for several moments in silence.

"What are you thinking about, Chourineur?" asked Rodolphe.

"Nothing, nothing. At length they seized me. I was tried and sentenced to death."

"You made your escape, then."

"No, but I was sent for fifteen years to the galleys. I forgot to tell you, that I saved two comrades from drowning in the Marne; and that when stationed at Rouen, where the barracks were miserable wooden shanties, a fire broke forth, the buildings were instantly in flames, and a cry arose that a woman was perishing. I rushed into her room; it was as warm as the plaster-kiln. I found her, and saved her life. By my lawyer's aid the sentence was commuted; fifteen years in the galleys, instead of the scaffold. When I heard that I was not to be put to death, I was tempted to kill myself. Do you understand that, master?"

"Were you sorry to have your sentence changed?"

"Yes, I was: for those who play with the knife, the guillotine is the thing; those who steal have irons on their feet; every one to his deserts: but it is too bad to force a man to live who has slain his fellow-man."

"You were stung by remorse?"

"Remorse! No, I have made atonement for what I have done," said the savage; "I served out my time faithfully; but formerly, not a night passed but the sergeant whom I had slain, and the soldiers I had stabbed, stood before me, and they were not alone," added the bandit, trembling at the reminiscence; "there were scores, hundreds, thousands, standing in a row, awaiting their turn, like the horses in the slaughter-house; then I began to slay these men, but the more I slew the more appeared—an endless, interminable line for me to slay; and, as they died, they would cast on me a glance so mild, so gentle and so kind, that my soul was stung with anguish at the crime I was forced to commit. I never had a brother, but this long phalanx of butchered men, in the frenzy of my dream, seemed brothers, for whom I felt a yearning love, and would have died a thousand deaths to serve. I woke up, drenched with perspiration but cold as ice."

"'Twas a horrid dream," said Rodolphe.

"The first six weeks I spent in the bagnio, every night this awful dream visited me. I tried to kill myself; at one time by swallowing verdigris, at another time by strangling myself with the iron chain: the poison only made me thirsty, and the chain only left a mark which appeared like a natural cravat. After this, the hardy discipline of the galley overcame my nightmares, and I lived like the rest."

"You were in a good school there to learn to steal."

"Yes, but I had no taste for stealing; the other convicts jeered my honesty, but I lashed them for it with my chain. 'Twas there I became acquainted with the Schoolmaster. I have a great respect for his fists; he flogged me, just as you have done."

"He is a liberated convict, then?"

"No; he was condemned for life, but made his escape."

"Why is he not denounced?"

"I am not the man to do it; 'twould look as if I feared him."

"Do not the police know him?"

"They did once, but no one but the devil would recognize him now. It is a long time since he erased from his face the features which God gave him."

"How did he do it?"

"He commenced by chiselling off part of his nose, and altering its shape; and then he washed his face with vitriol. You will see him, should he come to-night. He once had a long parrot-nose, but now it is as flat as a terrier's; his lips are as big as my fist, and his face as seared and rough as a beggar's jacket. 'Tis six months since he escaped from Rochefort; the spies have met him a hundred times, but do not recognize him."

"What was he sent to the galleys for?"

"For counterfeiting, robbery, and murder. He is called the Schoolmaster, because he writes a fair hand and affects great learning."

"What does he do for a living?"

"Why, three weeks ago, he robbed and murdered a man on the road to Poissy."

"He will be captured soon."

"'Twill take two to do it: he always carries a pair of loaded pistols under his blouse, and also a dirk."

"After you left the bagnio, Chourineur, what did you do?"

"I hired out to the chief-porter of the quay Saint Paul, and got my living there."

"But why do you live in the *Cité*, since you are no thief?"

"And where should I live? Who will associate with a liberated convict? I am not fond of solitude: here I find my equals. I am feared and dreaded in the *Cité*, which is some satisfaction. I fight occasionally: besides, the police have nothing to do with me except for fighting, and that is only punished by twenty-four hours in the jail."

"How much do you earn a day?"

"Thirty-five sous: that will support me as long as I have arms, and when my strength fails, I'll take a hook and basket, like the old rag-gatherer, whom I dimly discern through the mist which hangs over the memory of my youth."

"But you are most unhappy."

"Were it not for that dream which haunts me, I might die as tranquilly as any other, in the corner of the street or the hospital: but the dream—ah! I do not like to think of it:" and he emptied the ashes from his pipe on the corner of the table.

Goualeuse had listened to the narrative of Chourineur with a very distracted attention: she seemed absorbed in a painful revery. Rodolphe himself was pensive: the stories he had just listened to awoke novel ideas in his mind; but a tragical incident recalled his attention to the character of the place in which he was seated.

CHAPTER V.....THE ARREST.

The man who had left the *tapis-franc*, leaving his tankard and plate under the protection of the ogress, soon returned, accompanied by another individual, with broad shoulders and energetic countenance. "It was a fortunate chance," said he to his companion, "that I happened to meet you, Borel. Let us take a glass of wine."

Chourineur whispered to Rodolphe and Fleur de Marie, that there would be some difficulty now. "Watch," said he, "but say nothing: that man is a spy."

The two bandits who had been seated together, exchanged rapid glances with each other, arose from their seats, and took a direction toward the door. The officers threw themselves upon them, uttering a peculiar yell. A terrible struggle commenced, the door flew open, and in rushed troops of police officers, gendarmes with muskets and glittering sabres. Taking advantage of the confusion, the coalman caught accidentally the glance of Rodolphe, and placed his fore-finger significantly upon his lips. Rodolphe, with a gesture rapid and imperious, ordered him to depart, and continued to fix his attention upon the proceedings in the tavern. The man with the Grecian cap uttered demoniacal howlings, as he lay stretched upon the table; his struggles were so nervous and violent, that the combined strength of two powerful men could scarcely restrain him. The other, on the contrary, gloomy, resigned, and senseless, his lips colorless, his under jaw dropped, and his countenance convulsively agitated, offered no resistance to the ministers of justice, but stretched forth his hands to receive the handcuffs. The ogress, seated inside of the bar, familiar with such scenes, remained a careless and indifferent spectator, with her hands thrust into the pockets of her apron.

"What have these men been doing, Mr. Borel?" said she to the police officer, whom she knew.

"They murdered an old woman in the rue St. Christophe last night, in order to steal her money. Before she died, she said that in the struggle she had bit one of the ruffians on the hand. These two rascals were suspected; and my comrade came here to-night to assure himself of their identity."

"'T was lucky for me they paid for their supper beforehand," said the ogress. "Won't you take a glass of consolation, Mr. Borel?"

"Thank you, Mother Ponisse. I must lock up these villains immediately; one of them is still rampant."

Sure enough, the man in the cap was struggling with renewed energy. He was conveyed to the carriage by main strength. His accomplice, convulsed with fear, was unable to support himself: his bluish lips seemed moving as if to speak, and they flung him, an inanimate heap, by the side of his companion in iniquity.

"You must look out for Red-arm, Mother Ponisse," said the officer: "he is a shrewd one, and may compromise you."

"Red-arm! It is a long time since he has been in this neighborhood, Mr. Borel."

"It is always so with him," said the officer; "where he is, he is not to be seen; but take no bundle, no merchandise, no parcel from him, for it would be receiving stolen goods."

"Be easy, Mr. Borel; I fear Red-arm as I do the devil. People never know whither he goes nor whence he comes. The last time I saw him, he said he had just returned from Germany."

"Well, I have given you warning. Keep your eyes open, that is all."

Before leaving the *tapis-franc*, the officer scrutinized attentively all the inmates of the tavern, and said to Chourineur in an almost affectionate tone, "Here you are again, bad fellow. It is long since you got into any scrape; you've had no fights of late; you must be improving."

"Improving very much, Mr. Borel. I seldom break heads unless I am provoked to do so."

"To fight without provocation, would be an abuse of your strength."

"Here, however, is my master, Mr. Borel," said he, laying his hand on Rodolphe's shoulder.

"But I do not know this fellow," said the officer.

"Nor do I think you ever will," said Rodolphe.

"I hope not, my boy." Then, turning to the ogress, he said, "Good night, Mother Ponisse. Your *tapis-franc* is a perfect mouse-trap: this is the third murderer I have caught here."

"And I hope it will not be the last; it is entirely at your service," said she, bowing graciously.

After the departure of the officer, the faded youth addressed Chourineur. "Did you not know the man in the Grecian cap?" said he; "it was Velu. When I saw the officers, I said to myself, something is to pay; for Velu kept his hand hid all the time under the table."

"'T was lucky for the Schoolmaster that he was not here. the Greek cap inquired for him twice; they have business together," said the ogress. "But I don't betray my customers. If they are caught, very well; every one to his trade. Hallee! speaking of the devil, we see his tail," said she, as a man and a woman were seen entering the tavern. "Here is the Schoolmaster with his new woman."

A perceptible shuddering ran through the inmates of the *tapis-franc*. Rodolphe, in spite of his natural intrepidity, could not restrain his emotions at the sight of this redoubtable brigand; he contemplated him with a curiosity mingled with horror. Chourineur had told the truth: the Schoolmaster had disfigured himself into a supernatural ugliness. The imagination is unequal to the task of conceiving the hideousness of the bandit's countenance. It was furrowed and seamed with scars; the corrosive action of the vitriol had swelled his lips into a horrible, Ghoul-like monstrosity; the cartilage of his nose having been cut off, two large holes indicated the place where the organ once was; his light-gray, small, and clearly-defined eyes, sparkled with the fierceness of an enraged hyena; his forehead receded like the cranium of a beast of prey; and you could not but regard the cap of long rough fur under which it disappeared, as an appendage connected with the animal. He was not more than five feet nine inches high. His head was uncommonly large, and completely sunk between his high and expanded shoulders, the strong and corded muscles of which could be distinctly seen through the folds of his coarse blouse; his arms long and sinewy; his hands short, thick, bony, and covered with hair; his legs, somewhat bowed, disclosed an extraordinary size and weight of calf; in short, as far as his muscular developments were concerned, he offered to the sight a perfect copy of the thick and powerful Hercules of Farnese. To portray the expression of the frightful mask which his face presented, we confess ourselves inadequate.

The woman who accompanied him was old, rather neatly dressed in a brown gown, red and black shawl, and a white cap upon her head. Rodolphe caught a glance of her profile: lips spare and compressed, a projecting chin, a hooked nose, the solitary green round eye glistening with cunning and wickedness. He was about to impart his observations to Goualeuse, when, raising his eyes to the young girl, he observed that she was pallid as death; that her frame was shaking with silent terror, and that her eyes were fastened on the frightful companion of the Schoolmaster. At last, seizing Rodolphe's arm with a nervous grasp, Fleur de Marie whispered to him in a tremulous voice, "Good God! it is Chouette, the one-eyed one." At this moment the Schoolmaster, having exchanged a few words with the different inmates of the *tapis-franc*, advanced to the table around which our friends were seated; and addressing Fleur de Marie, said, in a sort of short quick growl, "Look here, my white-haired belle, leave these chaps and come over here with me."

Goualeuse spoke not a word, but nestled close to Rodolphe, her frame shivering with fear.

"I promise not to be jealous," said the horrible Chouette, laughing heartily; not recognizing in Goualeuse her wretched victim Pegriotte.

"Don't you hear me, my darling?" said the monster, advancing; "if you don't come quickly, I'll make you a match for Chouette, by pulling out one of your eyes; and you, young sprig with the mustache, pass her over the table to me, or I'll crush you to a jelly."

"For Heaven's sake defend me!" cried Goualeuse to Rodolphe, joining her little hands in supplication; and then, suddenly thinking that she was exposing him to great danger, exclaimed: "Oh no! no! do not move, Mr. Rodolphe; if he comes near me, I will alarm the neighborhood with my cries; and the ogress will protect me, through fear of the police."

"Be calm, my girl," said Rodolphe; "you are seated by *my* side, and no man living shall harm you. As for this disgusting beast, he makes you sick and me also, and I am going to throw him into the street."

"You!" said the Schoolmaster.

"I!" replied Rodolphe; and in spite of Goualeuse's efforts, he rose from the table.

The Schoolmaster started back at the terrific expression of Rodolphe's eye; and even Fleur de Marie and Chourineur could scarcely recognize, in a face distorted with rage, the noble countenance of their companion. In his combat with Chourineur, he had merely showed himself disdainful; but face to face with the Schoolmaster, it seemed as if the demon of hatred had taken possession of his frame, and flashed its rage from his fiery and protruding eye-balls. Certain expressions of eye, have a supernatural and irresistible power; it is said that some famous duelists have owed their triumphs to a peculiarity of eye, which overawes their antagonists. Rodolphe was endowed with one of these miraculous glances, which penetrates the soul with terror; which its victims can neither avoid nor resist; for while subduing their spirit, it fascinates their gaze. The Schoolmaster perceived its influence and acknowledged its effect; for no longer trusting to his natural powers, he searched under his blouse for the handle of his stiletto. Murder might have followed if Chouette had not seized the Schoolmaster by the arm, and cried:

"One moment, one moment, *Fourline*;* you can eat up these chaps, at any other time they cannot escape you." The old hag had recognized Goualeuse. "Is it possible!" exclaimed she, stepping in between the antagonists, and clasping her hands in amazement: "'t is Pegriotte—the candy thief! but where came you from? The *baker*† must have sent you here to fall under my clutches," added she, threatening her with her fist: "never mind; if I can't draw out all your teeth, I 'll extract all the tears from your eyes. I know your parents! The Schoolmaster saw, in the galleys, the man who gave you to me. They are noble and rich."

"Do you know my parents?" exclaimed Fleur de Marie, in rapture.

"Yes: I know the name of your mother, but I will cut out my tongue before I will disclose it. I saw the man yesterday who brought you to my garret, because your mother would not pay his wife for nursing you. Your dame did n't care much for you; but you could make her sweat for it now, if you only knew her name. The man has papers from your mother: yes, letters; and if he does not use them, it is because he has his reasons for it. You are mad now, the tears begin to fall; but you shall never see your mother; no, you shall never see her."

"I am willing she should believe me dead," said Fleur de Marie, wiping her eyes.

Rodolphe had forgotten the Schoolmaster, in the interest which Chouette's disclosures excited.

Meanwhile, the brigand, no longer under the influence of Rodolphe's glance, recovered his courage; he could not believe that a youth, with so slender a form, could master a man like himself. Confident in his superiority, he again approached the protector of Goualeuse. "You have blabbed long enough," said he to Chouette: "let me place my mark on that fine face, so that the fair one may find it no handsomer than mine."

With one leap, Rodolphe jumped upon the table.

"Don't break my plates!" vociferated the ogress.

The Schoolmaster placed himself in a fighting attitude; his shoulders back, his frame braced, and one of his immense legs, firm as a stone column, advanced.

At the very instant Rodolphe was rushing upon him, the door of the *tapis-franc* opened violently; the coalman hastened into the room, and pushing back the Schoolmaster, whispered to Rodolphe in English, "My lord, Tom and Sarah are at the entrance of this street." At these mysterious words, Rodolphe, with an expression of anger, threw a louis on the bar, and hurried toward the door. The Schoolmaster made an attempt to arrest his passage. Rodolphe, turning suddenly upon him, let fly in his face two blows so well planted, that the bully shook, tottered, and fell stunned upon the table.

"Hurrah!" cried Chourineur; "I recognize those finishing blows: after a few more lessons, I shall have learned them myself."

In a few seconds, the Schoolmaster recovered and started in pursuit of Rodolphe; but he, followed by the coalman, had disappeared among the crooked streets of the *Cité*. As the Schoolmaster was entering the tavern again, foaming with rage, two men, running from the direction opposite to that which Rodolphe had taken, entered the *tapis-franc*, heated and out of breath, and cast a searching glance around the room.

"Wo is me," said one of them in English; "he has escaped our pursuit."

"Days have twenty-four hours, and life is long," said the other, in the same tongue: "be patient."

CHAPTER VI..... TOM AND SARAH.

The two individuals who had just entered, were of a rank more elevated than the ordinary frequenters of the *tapis-franc*. One of them—tall and slim, with very light hair, but dark eyebrows and whiskers, and with a long brown face, and severe expression of countenance—wore his black frock coat buttoned up to the collar, yellow-topped boots drawn over his gray pants, and a crape around his hat. His companion was in mourning also; he was pale, but handsome; his dark eyes and dark long hair and brows, gave a peculiar whiteness to his delicate complexion—the seeming man was evidently a woman in disguise.

"Call for something to drink," said Sarah, still speaking in English, "and let us try to learn from these strange people, something about *him*."

"I will," answered the other; and he said to the ogress in good French, and without any foreign accent: "Madam, give us something to drink, if you please."

The arrival of these two individuals at the *tapis-franc*, created a great sensation. Their air, costume and manners, all announced that they were not habituated to such low places of resort; while their anxious countenances and searching glances indicated, that nothing but a powerful motive could have drawn them here. Chourineur, the Schoolmaster and Chouette, watched them with excited curiosity. Poor Goualeuse, holding in equal terror both the Schoolmaster and Chouette, improved this diversion to slide through the half-opened door, and retreat from the *tapis-franc*. Chourineur and the Schoolmaster, having a mutual respect for each other's prowess, were not anxious to renew the fight. The ogress shared the general surprise at the arrival of such distinguished guests. Tom again addressed her with considerable impatience:

"We have asked you for some drink, madam; have the kindness to attend to us."

Mother Ponisse, pleased with the civility of his tone, arose from her seat and approached to the table where they were seated.

"Will you have a pint of wine or a sealed bottle?" said she.

"A bottle, with some glasses and water."

The ogress brought forward what was ordered; and Tom, throwing her a five-franc piece, refused the change which she offered. "Keep that for yourself, hostess," said he, "and take a glass of wine with us."

"You are very civil, sir," said she, looking at Tom with more surprise than gratitude.

"We expected to meet one of our friends at a tavern in this street, but we have, perhaps, come to the wrong place."

"This is the White Rabbit, at your service, sir."

"Just so," said Tom. "He was to wait for us at the White Rabbit."

"Well, there is but one White Rabbit in the street; I am the hostess, and proud I am of it: how does your friend look?"

"Tall and slender, with hair and mustache of light-brown color."

"Why, it must have been the man who was here but a moment since; a tall coalman came after him, and they went out together."

"It must have been them," said Tom to his friend.

"Were they alone here?" asked Sarah.

"The coalman was here but a moment; your friend took supper here with Chourineur and Goualeuse:" and the ogress indicated the only one of Rodolphe's companions who remained in the room, by her glance.

Tom and Sarah now turned their faces to Chourineur, and after examining him for a moment, Sarah said in English to her companion: "Do you know this man?"

"No," replied the other, in the same tongue. "Karl lost sight of Rodolphe at the entrance of this street; and seeing Murph disguised as a coalman, around this tavern, and occasionally peering through the glass, his suspicions were aroused, and he came and informed me."

During this conversation, conducted in a low voice and foreign tongue, the Schoolmaster and Chouette were whispering together, and eyeing the strangers.

"That tall fellow," said the Schoolmaster, "just gave five francs to the ogress; he has money. It's now almost twelve, and it storms violently; when they go out, we will follow them. I 'll knock down the man, and he will give his money through fear of our injuring the woman."

"If she calls the watch," said Chouette, "I have my vitriol in my pocket, which I will throw into her face. We must always give children something to keep them from crying; and look here," continued she, "the next time we meet with Pegriotte, we must carry her off. I 'll put a wash on to her face that will take down her pride."

"Chouette," said the Schoolmaster, "I must marry you at last; there never was your equal in deviltry. In that affair with the drover, I tested your spunk; 'this woman' said I, 'is better than any man.'"

"Suppose," said Tom to his companion, "we inquire of this fellow about Rodolphe; we may learn what brought him here." Then addressing Chourineur, he said: "My friend, we were to meet here the gentleman who took supper with you. As you seem to know him, perhaps you can tell us where he has gone."

"My acquaintance with him only commenced about two hours ago, by means of a flogging which he gave me."

"Had you never seen him before?"

"Never: I met with him in Red-arm's alley."

"Come, hostess, give us another bottle of wine, and let it be your best."

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* *Fourline*—diminutive for *Fourlourcur*—assassin.

† The thieves call the devil, "baker," from the disposition which they have reason to believe he will one day make of their bodies.

They had scarcely moistened their lips with what had been poured from the first bottle into their glasses. Mother Ponisse, however, had honored her wine-cellar by draining her glass several times.

"Place the wine on that gentleman's table," added Tom, "if he will allow it;" and both of the strangers removed to the table where Chourineur sat, who was flattered and astonished by such unusual politeness.

The Schoolmaster and Chouette were maturing their sinister projects.

The ogress took it for granted that she was a member of the party, and seated herself with Chourineur and the strangers, after placing upon the table the wine which had been ordered.

"You said, my brave fellow, that you had met Rodolphe in Red-arm's alley;" said Tom, touching Chourineur's glass with his own.

"Yes, my brave;" said the latter, quickly emptying his glass.

"Red-arm has a singular name: pray, what does he do?"

"He *runs in on his own hook*," said Chourineur carelessly, adding with a wink, "this is first-rate wine, Mother Ponisse."

"That's no reason for having your glass empty," said Tom, filling a bumper for Chourineur.

"Your excellent health," said the latter, "and also to your little friend, who—I can smell a rat. Never mind: if my aunt were a man, she would not be my uncle. I see that you are a rogue."

Sarah blushed perceptibly.

"I did not understand what you told us about Red-arm," said Tom, taking no notice of the innuendoes of his companion; "Rodolphe was coming out of his house, I presume?"

"I told you that Red-arm runs in on his own hook."

Tom looked at Chourineur in blank astonishment.

"How is it that Red-arm performs this singular feat of running on his own hook: is he a juggler?"

Chourineur laughed. "I see," said he, "that you do not understand our slang. A runner on his own hook is a smuggler—a free-trader."

"Slang!" said Tom, in amazement.

"You must be green ones; Rodolphe is up to anything, and, although he is a fan-painter, he could teach me in speaking slang. Since you do not understand our fine language, I tell you in plain French, that Red-arm is a smuggler; and, in giving you the information, I do not betray him; for he makes no secret of his trade, but boasts of it in the face of the officers, and tells them to catch him if they can. He is no fool, I tell you."

"But what did Rodolphe do in this man's house?" asked Sarah.

"I cannot inform you, sir, or madam, as you please. I know nothing about it. This evening I wanted to beat Goualeuse, which was wrong, for she is a good girl; she ran away, and hid herself in Red-arm's alley, and I ran after her. It was so dark that the devil himself could n't see, and instead of catching her, I caught a Tartar, who gave me my deserts in a capital manner: he has promised to show me the blow."

"And Red-arm; what kind of goods does he sell?"

"Oh! he sells all that is forbidden to be sold: he does what is forbidden to be done. That's his business; is it not, Mother Ponisse?"

"O yes: he's a man that knows his knee-joint from his elbow," said the ogress.

"That's more than the custom-house officers know, for he cheats them in their very teeth: they have often searched his house, but never found anything; and yet, after the search, he comes out with his bales."

"He's a sly dog," said the ogress; "they say that he has in his house a hiding-place, which communicates with the catacombs by means of a well."

"But it never has been found," said Chourineur.

"What's the number of his house?"

"13, rue aux Fèves: Red-arm, dealer in—anything you please. All this is well known in the *Cité*."

"I will write his direction in my tablets: if we do not find Rodolphe, I will try to get information from Red-arm respecting him." So saying, Tom wrote down the direction on his tablets.

"You have a substantial friend in Master Rodolphe; he's a clever fellow: if the coalman had not interrupted him, he would have given the Schoolmaster yonder a touch on the comb. I have to hold myself back with the strength of four men, to keep myself from tearing to pieces that old witch that is with him, when I think of the manner she abused poor Goualeuse. But, patience: a kick is not lost because it is not sent home, as they say."

"If Rodolphe beat you, you must hate him," said Sarah.

"I hate a man that fights like Rodolphe! not I, queer as it may seem. There's the Schoolmaster, who flogged me, and I would laugh to see him strangled; but Master Rodolphe flogged me still harder, and I would go through fire and water to serve him; and yet I never met him before this evening."

"You say this because we are his friends."

"Thunder! no; he whipped *me*, and I know something about fighting, and he was no more proud of it than if he had crushed a fly: he's a capital fellow! Besides, he says such things to one—things that make the heart feel queer; and, besides that, there is something more than old glass in his eye, when he fixes it upon you. I have been a soldier; and under him for a chief, I could pull down the moon and stars."

Tom and Sarah looked at each other in silence.

"Does this power of subjugation," said she, after an interval, "follow him everywhere?"

"It will, until we have broken the charm," said the other.

"Whatever happens, it must be done," said Sarah, passing her hand over her brow, as if to drive away an unpleasant recollection.

Twelve o'clock struck from the Hotel de Ville.

The tavern-lamp cast a dim and doubtful light. All the inmates of the *tapis-franc* had deserted it, except Chourineur and his two companions, Chouette and the Schoolmaster.

"Let us go and hide in the alley opposite," whispered the brigand to the woman: "we will watch these people, and when they come out we will be after them. Should they take the left, we will wait for them at the corner of the rue Saint Eloi; if the right, we will hide by the house they are tearing down in the rue Triperie: there is a deep hole there. I have my thoughts about me."

The Schoolmaster and Chouette started toward the door.

"Don't you take anything to-night?" said Mother Ponisse to them.

"No, mother: we only came in to shelter ourselves from the rain;" and they departed.

CHAPTER VII..... YOUR PURSE OR YOUR LIFE!

The noise of the closing door aroused Tom and Sarah from their revery. They rose, and thanked Chourineur for the information which he had imparted. His great admiration for Rodolphe, sincerely but rudely expressed, had not raised him in their estimation.

Chourineur now departed. The wind was blowing with the violence of a hurricane, and the rain pouring down in torrents. The Schoolmaster and Chouette, from their ambush, perceived that Chourineur was advancing in the direction of the rue Triperie, where the dilapidated house stood; and the sound of his footsteps, somewhat heavier than usual from his frequent libations, were soon lost in the whistling of the wind, and the pattering of the rain against the walls.

Tom and Sarah soon left the tavern, in spite of the storm, and took a direction opposite to that which Chourineur had gone.

"They are lost," whispered the Schoolmaster to his satellite; "seize your vitriol-bottle, and keep your eyes open."

"Let us remove our shoes," said Chouette, "and they won't hear us walking behind them."

"Right! always right!" whispered the other; "a man would not have thought of that: walk as if you were treading on eggs." And the hideous couple, removing their shoes, glided stealthily along in the shadow of the houses like the beast they so much resembled. By this means of device, their steps were not heard by Tom and Sarah, whom they followed close.

"Our carriage is fortunately at the corner of the street," said Tom, "or the rain would drench us. Are you not cold?"

"Perhaps we shall learn something of him from the smuggler," said Sarah, with her mind wandering on another subject.

"I have mistaken the road," said Tom; "we passed an old ruined house in coming down, we must turn about to find it."

The Schoolmaster and Chouette threw themselves into the recess of a door, and were unobserved, although almost elbowed by Tom and Sarah.

"I'd rather have them go toward the rubbish: if the gentleman resists, I then shall have a place for him."

The dilapidated building, with its cellar uncovered, disclosed a considerable excavation, extending to the middle of the street. The Schoolmaster leaped upon his prey with the power and the suddenness of a tiger; and grasping Tom by the throat, said, "Your money, or I'll plunge you into this hole as your grave!" and he thrust him backward, and with one of his sinewy hands held him suspended over the pit, while, with the other, he seized as with a vice the arm of Sarah.

Before Tom could reply, Chouette had rifled his pockets with wonderful dexterity.

Sarah neither fled, nor cried for help, nor offered any resist-

ance; but said with great coolness, "Give them your money, Tom." And addressing the brigand: "You see we offer no resistance, make no noise; do not harm us."

Chouette, having searched their pockets, said: "Show us your fingers, let us see if you wear rings. Pshaw!" continued she, in a grumbling tone, "you must be poor wretches; you have no rings."

Tom's presence of mind was not at all disturbed by an interruption so startling and unexpected. "Won't you strike a bargain with me, most worthy brigand?" said he: "the pocket-book contains papers, which are useless to you; bring it to me to-morrow, and I will give you twenty-five louis."

"Do you suppose I can be led into a mouse-trap, by such a trick? No, no; march without looking behind you—you're lucky in getting off so easily."

"Hold!" said Chouette; "if he is disposed to be accommodating, he can have his pocket-book; I can arrange it. Do you know the plain of St. Denis?" said she to Tom.

"Yes."

"Do you know where a place called Saint Ouen, is?"

"Yes."

"Opposite Saint Ouen, at the end of the road Revolte, the plain is perfectly flat; one can see the fields there as far as the eye can reach. Come there to-morrow morning, entirely alone, with the cash in your hand, and you will find me there with the pocket-book."

"Take care, he'll have a spring-trap for you, Chouette."

"No, he can't come it: I have but one eye, but 'tis a good one. If he don't come alone, he'll find me missing."

A sudden thought now struck Sarah. "Do you wish to earn a fine sum of money?" said she, addressing the brigand.

"As much as any man."

"Did you not observe in the tavern, for I saw *you* there, the individual for whom the coalman came?"

"What! a thin fellow, with a mustache! O yes: I was going to place my mark on his pretty face, but he showed us his heels after giving two blows that upset me on the table, which never happened to me before: but I'll have my revenge."

"It is concerning him that I wish your aid."

"Concerning him! give me a thousand francs, and I'll kill him for you."

"Sarah!" exclaimed Tom, with great emotion.

"Wretch! I don't wish you to slay him."

"What do you wish then?"

"Come to-morrow to the plain of St. Denis, and you'll find my companion there, entirely alone. He will tell you what you must do; and if you succeed, I will give you not one, but two thousand francs."

"Fourline," said Chouette, in a low tone, "these are people who have cash; we can get it. They wish to play some trick on their foe, that young rascal you wanted to kick; we must go. Two thousand francs! 'tis worth the trouble."

"Well, sir, my wife will go; tell her what's to be done, and I will do it."

"Let it be so—to-morrow at one o'clock."

"Yes: on the plain of St. Denis."

"The plain St. Denis?"

"Between St. Ouen and the road Revolte, at the foot of the bluff."

"Well said."

"And I will bring you back your pocket-book."

"You shall have the five hundred francs promised, and an advance on the other business, if you are reasonable."

"Now take the right," said the Schoolmaster; "we take the left: follow us if you dare;" and he and the woman hurried away.

"The devil himself seems to have come to our aid; the rascal will be of use."

"I have my fears," said Tom.

"I am filled with hope. But come on, I know where we are now; the carriage can't be far off;" and the strangers directed their steps toward Notre Dame.

An unseen witness had been present at this interview. It was Chourineur himself, who had taken shelter from the rain among the ruins of the old building. The proposal made by Sarah excited his curiosity, and alarmed him for the safety of his new *friend*; and he regretted his inability to forewarn him of the perils which awaited him. His intense hatred of Chouette and the Schoolmaster, undoubtedly increased the benevolence of his feelings toward Rodolphe. Chourineur resolved to inform his friend of the danger which threatened him; but he had forgotten the residence of the pretended fan-painter, and it was doubtful whether he would return again to the *tapis-franc*. While making these reflections, he had unconsciously followed Tom and Sarah until he saw them enter a carriage, which was waiting for them in front of Notre Dame. The carriage started; a luminous thought shot through the brain of Chourineur; he perched himself behind the advancing carriage, and accompanied it until it halted, at one in the morning, on the Boulevard of the Observatory, and Tom and Sarah disappeared in one of the streets at right angles to the Boulevard. The night was dark: Chourineur could see no mark which would enable him to identify the place in the morning; but following the examplo of the Indians, he drew his knife from his pocket, and cut a large piece of bark from the tree nearest to which the carriage stood, after which he betook himself to his distant abode. For the first time he enjoyed a peaceful slumber, uninterrupted by the horrible vision of the slaughter-house for soldiers, as he called that dream in his rude language.

CHAPTER VIII..... A RIDE.

On the morning which succeeded the events we have narrated, a glorious autumnal sun, from the midst of a clear blue sky, poured its light into the gloomy neighborhood to which the reader has followed us: it seemed less horrible by the light of day. Either because Rodolphe did not anticipate another meeting with the individuals whom he had avoided on the preceding night, or because he had determined to brave an interview, he was seen the next morning, about eleven o'clock, entering the rue Fèves, and turning his steps toward the ogress's tavern. Rodolphe still wore the costume of a laborer; but a certain air of neatness and taste betrayed his disguise. His blouse, open in front, permitted his red flannel undershirt to be seen, fastened with small silver buttons; while a white linen collar was turned over a black silk cravat, tied carelessly around his neck. Underneath his blue velvet cap with varnished front, a few light-brown locks escaped negligently; boots of unsoiled polish had supplanted the coarse shoes of the previous night, and by the excellence of their fit did full justice to the smallness of his feet, which seemed almost lost in the wide, full legs of his velvet pantaloons. This costume displayed to full advantage the grace and suppleness of Rodolphe's figure. The dress of the higher orders is all so unbecoming, that they would frequently gain in personal appearance, by exchanging it for that of the working classes.

The ogress was promenading in front of her own door when Rodolphe made his appearance.

"Your most obedient servant, young man. I suppose you have come after the change for your twenty francs!" not presuming to forget that he had thrown a louis on the counter the previous evening. "I owe you seventeen francs and ten sous. Besides, a tall gentleman in a black frock coat and yellow-topped boots, like a drum-major, with a small woman on his arm disguised in men's clothes, inquired about you last night, and drank *sealed* wine with Chourineur."

"Oh! they drank with Chourineur, did they? and pray, what did they say to him?"

"When I said they drank, I was mistaken; they only moistened their lips in their glasses."

"Indeed! but what did they say to Chourineur?"

"Oh! they talked to him about one thing and another; about the wind, and the weather, and the rain, and Red-arm——"

"They know Red-arm, then!"

"On the contrary, Chourineur had to explain to them who he is; and he also told them how he himself was flogged by you."

"Well, that is not what I want now."

"You want your change, I suppose!"

"Yes; and I wish to take Goualouse on a jaunt into the country."

"I cannot allow it, my boy."

"Why not, pray?"

"Suppose she don't come back! Her clothes belong to me: besides, she owes me two hundred and twenty francs for her board and lodging. O no! she can't go. If she were not as honest as she is, I would not let her go to the corner."

"Goualeuse owe you two hundred and twenty francs!"

"Two hundred and twenty francs and ten sous. But what's that to you? Don't think to come over *me* by passing yourself off for a great lord; one would think you expected to pay it."

"Take those," said Rodolphe, throwing eleven louis* on the pewter bar. "How much is the dress worth?"

The old hag, aghast with astonishment, examined each separate coin with a scrutinizing eye, in doubt of its genuineness.

"I am not giving you counterfeit money; send the gold to

* A louis is twenty francs, a franc twenty sous, and a sous about one cent

be changed, and we will conclude the business. How much is the dress worth?"

The ogress, hesitating between her grasping avarice, her astonishment at seeing a laborer with so much money, and her fear of being duped, was for a long time silent. After a moment, however, she said: "The clothes are worth,at least one hundred francs."

"A hundred francs for such rags! what do you mean? Keep last evening's change, and I will add to it another louis—not a farthing more. To be cheated by you is robbing the poor, who have a right to our charity."

"Very well, my boy; I keep the clothes: Goualeuse shall not leave the house. I am at liberty to sell my things for what I think them worth."

"Lucifer will roast you one day, if you have your deserts! Here is your money: go bring Goualeuse."

The ogress pocketed the gold, in a state of great bewilderment whether the workman had robbed a bank, or been left a legacy. She finally said, with a vulgar and jeering laugh, "Why can't you go up yourself, sonny, after Goualeuse, 't would please her so well! for on the word of Mother Ponisse, she has taken an amazing fancy to you."

"Go after her yourself," said Rodolphe; "tell her I have invited her to go into the country with me, but not one word more: especially, do not tell her that I have paid her debts."

"Why so?"

"What matters that to you?"

"In fact, it is no matter of mine: I would rather she would still think herself under my thumb."

"Go: and keep your peace," said Rodolphe, in a tone and with a glance which startled the ogress.

"What an eye you have!" said she, departing in haste; "I pity those you hate."

After a few moments, she reappeared.

"Goualeuse would n't believe it. She turned crimson when I told her you were here; but when I informed her that she had my permission to spend the day in the country with you, I thought she would go crazy with joy: for the first time in her life, she seemed to feel like throwing her arms round my neck."

"'Twas her joy at leaving you for twenty-four hours."

Fleur de Marie entered, in the same dress she had worn the previous day: brown worsted frock and orange-colored shawl, with a red and blue plaid handkerchief tied *a la marmotte* around her head—two large auburn locks escaping therefrom. She blushed on recognizing Rodolphe, and cast down her eyes from modesty and confusion.

"Will you go and spend the day in the country with me, my child?" said Rodolphe.

"Most willingly," said Goualeuse, "since Mother Ponisse allows it."

"With the greatest pleasure, my little kitten; it is a reward for your good behavior. Now, come and kiss me;" and the hag stretched toward Fleur de Marie her rubicund visage.

As the lips of the girl were approaching the forehead of the ogress, Rodolphe gave the hag a violent blow with his elbow, which sent her reeling into her own bar; and with Fleur de Marie on his arm, he left the *tapis-franc*, in the midst of a shower of curses from Mother Ponisse.

"Take care, Mr. Rodolphe," said Goualeuse; "she will throw something at your head, for she is very malicious."

"Never fear for me. But you appear dissatisfied and sad: are you sorry that you are going into the country with me?"

"Oh! no, no; far from it: but you give me your arm."

"Well, and what of that?"

"You are a working-man; some one might tell your employer that you were seen with me, and masters do not like to have their working-men idle and frolicking;" and she gently disengaged her arm from Rodolphe, adding, "You go on alone; I will follow you as far as the gates, and when we reach the fields I will join you."

"Dismiss all such thoughts, Fleur de Marie," said Rodolphe, touched by the delicacy of her suggestion; "my employer does not live in this part of the city, and, besides, we shall find a carriage in the Flower-Market;" and he regained possession of her arm.

"As you please, Mr. Rodolphe; I merely said it that you might have no unpleasant feelings while walking with me."

"I believe you, my girl, and I thank you for it; but have you no choice as to what place in the country we shall go?"

"It is all the same to me, provided it is the country; the day is so fine, the air is so pure to breathe. It is now five months since I have been any further than the Flower-Market. The ogress permits me to leave her own neighborhood, only because she has great confidence in me."

"Did you come to this market to buy flowers?"

"No, indeed: I had no money. I only came to look at them, and breathe their sweet perfume. During the half-hour the ogress allowed me to spend in the Flower-Market, I forgot everything but my happiness."

"And when you returned home to those dirty streets?"

"I was more sad than ever. I concealed my tears in order to avoid being beaten: but here in the market, what moved my envy most was, to see the little seamstresses, neatly dressed, so cheerfully returning to their homes with flower-pots in their arms."

"I am sure if you could only have had some flowers in your windows, they would have been company for you."

"What you say is very true, Mr. Rodolphe. You must know, that once on her birthday, the ogress gave me a rose-bush: if you could but fancy how happy I was! I was no longer lonely, I assure you: I watched my rose-bush all the time. I counted the leaves as they put forth and grew, and when a bud appeared, my heart swelled with joy. But the air in the *Cité* is so bad, that after a few days it began to fade and droop—but you will laugh at me, Mr. Rodolphe."

"No, no: go on."

"I asked permission from the ogress to give an airing to my rose-bush, as if it were my child. I would then take it to the Flower-Market; and I thought, that with other flowers in that fresh, balmy air, it began to live again. I moistened its poor fading leaves in the water of the fountain, and placed it in the sun to dry. Dear little rose-bush! it never saw the sun in the *Cité*, for there the sun never reaches the street, it only falls upon the roofs; but when I brought it here—thanks to those airings—it lived ten days longer than it would have done at home."

"But when it died, its loss must have grieved you much."

"I wept for it; it was a real affliction to me: and since you can understand that one *may* have a love for flowers, I may as well tell you that I felt for it a kind of gratitude, a kind of—but surely you will laugh at me now."

"No, no; I have myself a love, a passion for flowers, and can well conceive all the feelings which they inspire."

"Well, I felt grateful that the poor rose-bush, in spite of what I was, would bloom so sweetly for *me*."

"Poor child! with all this consciousness of your wretched situation, you must have felt——"

"Desire to end it? Is it not so?" said Goualeuse, interrupting her companion. "O yes! many a time, in despair, I have looked at the deep waters of the Seine swelling above the parapet; but I turned my glance again to the flowers, to the sun, and said to myself, 'The river is always here; I am yet but sixteen—who knows?'"

"When you said, 'who knows?' hope inspired you?"

"Yes."

"And what did you hope?'

"I know not; but in spite of myself, hope would visit me. In such moments, it seemed to me that I did not deserve my fate; that there was some *goodness* in me. 'People have wronged me much,' said I, 'but I have never harmed a human being: if I had but a friend to counsel me, I should not be where I am.' That thought would make me sad, and often came to me," continued she in a solemn tone, which brought a smile to Rodolphe's lips, "after the loss of my rose-bush."

"Do you always feel this sorrow for that mournful loss?"

"Yes; look, here it is:" and Goualeuse drew from her pocket a bundle of sticks, carefully cut, and tied with a pink ribbon.

"You have preserved it, then?"

"Yes: *it is the only thing which I possess in this world.*"

"Have you nothing?"

"Nothing."

"But whose is that coral necklace?"

"It is the ogress's."

"Don't you own a cap, a handkerchief, anything?"

"No: nothing, nothing but the withered branches of my poor rose-bush, and that's the reason I love it so much."

At each successive word, Rodolphe was overwhelmed with pity and astonishment: he could not comprehend this frightful servitude; this complete surrender of soul and body, for a miserable shelter, a bundle of rags, and wretched food.*

Rodolphe and Goualeuse had now reached the Flower-Market, where a carriage was waiting for them. Rodolphe assisted Gou-

* Were we permitted to go into details, from which we shrink, we could prove that such servitude does exist; that the laws of society are so constituted, that a miserable creature can be sold by her own relations, into the abyss of infamy—it might be said, condemned for ever to remain in it: that her reputation, her remorse, are of no avail; and that it is almost physically impossible for her to emerge from her pollution. (See the valuable work of Dr. Parent Duchâtelet, containing the observations of a philanthropist and philosopher.)

aleuse in, and seating himself by her side, "To Saint Denis," said he to the driver; "I'll tell you what road to take, directly."

The horse started. The sun was bright, the sky cloudless, and the air blew fresh and bracing through the open windows of the carriage.

"Indeed! a lady's cloak?" said Goualeuse, perceiving a garment she had not seen before.

"Yes; it is for you, my child. I brought it with me for fear you should be cold: wrap yourself in it."

The girl's eyes sought Rodolphe's in blank amazement, that such unbounded kindness could be shown to *her!* A vague and indefinite sadness, a sort of surprise and intimidation, awoke in her bosom, which she could not satisfactorily explain.

"How kind you are, Mr. Rodolphe; I am filled with shame and bashfulness."

"Because I am so kind?"

"No: but it seems to me that you do not talk to me; that you do not treat me in the manner you did last evening."

"Now tell me, Fleur de Marie, which do you like best; the Rodolphe of yesterday, or the Rodolphe of to-day?".

"I like you much more as you are now; and yet I thought I was nearer your equal, yesterday." But immediately correcting herself, through fear of giving offence, she added, "I do not mean your equal, for that can never be."

"There is something in you which surprises me, Fleur de Marie."

"What is it, Mr. Rodolphe?"

"You seem to forget what Chouette told you last evening, about knowing your mother."

"O no! indeed, I have not forgotten it for a single moment; it was in my thoughts all last night, and I wept at the remembrance of what she told me. But I am sure there is no truth in it; 'twas invented by Chouette to wound my feelings."

It may be that Chouette is better informed than you suppose; and if so, would you not be rejoiced to find your mother?"

"Alas! Mr. Rodolphe, if my mother never loved me, what pleasure would it be to find her? she would refuse to see me; and if she ever has loved me, the shame that I should cause her would destroy it all; it would perhaps be the death of her."

"If your mother has ever loved you, Fleur de Marie, she will pity, forgive, and continue her love. If she forsook and abandoned you, her shame at the frightful fate she has brought upon you, will be a sufficient revenge."

"Revenge! what good will it do to be revenged? If I had thought of revenge, I should then confess that I had no excuse for my misery, and that has often consoled me."

"Perhaps you are right; but let us speak no more of this."

At this moment the carriage reached Saint Ouen's, at the junction of the road to Saint Denis with the road of Revolte.

In spite of the monotony of the landscape, Fleur de Marie was so enraptured at the sight of *the plains*, as she called them, that she forgot her grief, and the memory of the unhappy feelings Chouette had aroused, vanished from her joy-beaming countenance.

"What happiness, Mr. Rodolphe! the grass, the fields! If you would permit me to descend from the carriage, my joy would be complete; it would be so delightful to run about in these beautiful meadows."

"Let us run, my child. Coachman, stop."

"What! you too, Mr. Rodolphe?"

"Assuredly. I am delighted."

And Rodolphe and Goualeuse, hand in hand, ran over the vast and new-mowed fields. To describe the race, the gambols—to express the little joyous shouts of Fleur de Marie, would be absolutely impossible. Poor gazelle! so long a prisoner, she breathed with perfect rapture the pure air of liberty; she went forward, backward, halted, and every moment started with some new transport! At the sight of a few daisies and butter-cups, which the white frost had spared, she could not suppress new exclamations of delight; she spared not one of these little flowers, but gleaned them all from the field. Unused to habits of exercise, after she had ran to the middle of the plain, she was obliged to halt from fatigue; and panting for breath, sat down upon a log of wood which lay by the side of a deep excavation. Fleur de Marie's pure and transparent complexion, usually quite pale, bloomed now with the most brilliant color; her large blue eyes beamed with a softened lustre; one rosy lip, parting from its mate, revealed two even rows of moistened pearls; her bosom swelled under the little orange-colored shawl, as she pressed one hand upon it to restrain its beatings, while with the other, she extended to Rodolphe the bunch of wild-flowers she had gathered. Nothing could be more charming than the expression of pure joy which illumined her ingenuous face.

As soon as Fleur de Marie *could* speak, she said to Rodolphe, with an accent of profound felicity and religious gratitude, "*How good God is to give us such a beautiful day!*"

A tear moistened Rodolphe's eye, at hearing this poor, despised, abandoned, lost creature; without food, without shelter, utter a cry of joy and ineffable gratitude to her Creator, because she had been permitted to enjoy one ray of His sun—one glimpse of His fair creation.

He was aroused from his revery by an unforeseen incident.

CHAPTER IX. ..... THE SURPRISE.

GOUALEUSE, as we have said, was seated upon a log which lay by the side of a deep excavation. On a sudden, a man rose from the depths below, and shaking off the straw which covered him, burst into a roar of laughter! Goualeuse turned her head, and uttered a cry of fear.

'Twas Chourineur!

"Be not frightened, my girl," said he to Fleur de Marie, who had taken refuge with her companion. "This is what I call a fine surprise, a sudden meeting, Mr. Rodolphe: you did not expect to see me here, nor I you;" and then continued in quite a serious tone, "Hear me, master; people may say what they please, but there is something in the air there, over our heads, wiser than we are. God is a knowing one; it seemed to me as if He said to me, go as I push you; and that is very astonishing, considering that he pushed *you* here also."

"Pray, what were you doing there?" said Rodolphe, in great astonishment.

"I was keeping a look-out for your sake. Look, now, there is something brewing—decidedly, there is something brewing."

"But explain, I beg of you, what you were doing here."

"By-and-by you shall know it; just give me time to perch myself on your locomotive observatory;" and Chourineur ran to the carriage, which was drawn up at a short distance from the place, and ascending to the top of it, cast over the vast plain a searching glance, and returned quickly to Rodolphe.

"Will you be so kind as to explain to me the meaning of all this?"

"Be patient, be patient, my master. One more question: what time is it?"

"Half-past twelve," said Rodolphe, consulting his watch.

"Good! we still have time; Chouette won't be here this half-hour."

"Chouette!" exclaimed Rodolphe and the young girl, simultaneously.

"Yes, Chouette. In two words, master, here it is: Last night, after you left the *tapis-franc*, there came in——"

"A man of tall stature and a woman disguised, who asked for me. I know that; what else?"

"Why, they treated me to drink, and wanted to make me blab about you. I had nothing to say, seeing that you never communicated anything to me, except a beating. I knew nothing of your secrets; and if I had, it would have been all the same, for I am attached to you till death, Master Rodolphe. The devil take me if I know why, but I feel for you, as one would say, the affection of a bull-dog for his master. I cannot help it; it is your business; do as you please."

"I am much obliged to you, my friend; but go on."

"The tall gentleman and the little woman, seeing that they could get nothing out of me, left the tavern, and went toward the Palais de Justice: I went toward Notre Dame. When I got to the end of the street, I perceived that there were too many pitchforks falling for me to be abroad; and as there was a ruined house close by, I said to myself, 'Well, if the rain continues long, I can sleep here as well as in my own hole;' so I allowed myself to slide into a sort of cellar, where I made a bed of an old beam and a pillow of a stone, and I was reposing like a prince."

"Go on, go on."

"We had drank together, Mr. Rodolphe, and I had drank also with the tall man and little woman disguised, and my head was slightly foggy—slightly, I say; besides, there is nothing which lulls me to sleep like the noise of falling rain. I began to doze; but had not been dozing long, before I was woke up by the voice of the Schoolmaster talking amicably, as one would say, with somebody else. Mars! I recognized the voice of the tall man of the *tapis-franc*."

"What! were they talking with the Schoolmaster and Chouette?"

"With the Schoolmaster and Chouette; and they agreed to meet on the morrow."

"That is to-day," said Rodolphe.

"At one o'clock."

"That will be in a few minutes."

"At the junction of the road to Saint Denis with the road Revolte, on this very spot."

"Just so," said Rodolphe; "here is the place."

"The Schoolmaster! Have a care for yourself, Mr. Rodolphe," exclaimed Fleur de Marie.

"Be calm, my girl, he is not coming himself; 'tis only Chouette. But would the man—could *he* have anything to do with such a wretch?"

"I know nothing about *that*. Perhaps I only woke up toward the end of the talk; for the tall one spoke about receiving back his pocket-book, which Chouette was to bring to this place, for which he was to give her five hundred francs. It is probable that the Schoolmaster had robbed them, and only after that they commenced speaking on easy terms."

"'Tis very strange!"

"Oh, Heaven! I am frightened for you, Mr. Rodolphe," said Fleur de Marie.

"Mr. Rodolphe is not a child, my girl," said Chourineur; "but I thought it might be warm for him, so here I am."

"But proceed with your story, my good fellow."

"The tall man and the little woman promised to give to the Schoolmaster two thousand francs to do something, I know not what, to you. Chouette is to bring the pocket-book here, and learn from the man what is to be done, and the Schoolmaster is to take charge of the rest."

Fleur de Marie shuddered: Rodolphe smiled scornfully.

"Two thousand francs to do something to you, Master Rodolphe! That reminds me—I do not mean it by way of comparison—that when I see a reward of five hundred francs offered for a lost dog, I say to myself, 'You might lose yourself, you dog, and nobody would offer that to find you.' Two thousand francs to do something to Master Rodolphe! Pray, who are you?"

"That I will tell you some other time."

"Sufficient, master. But when I heard the proposal made by Chouette, I said to myself, 'I must learn where these rich covies roost, that wish to let loose the Schoolmaster on Rodolphe; it may be of use to him.' So, when they went away, I left the rubbish and followed them slily. They got into a coach in front of Notre Dame; I got up behind it, and we drove to the Boulevard of the Observatory. When we arrived there, 'twas so dark that I could not see anything, and I cut a notch in a tree to find the place the next day."

"Very well, my boy!"

"This morning I went back to the place. Ten steps from my tree, I saw a passage closed with an iron railing: in the mud of the alley large tracks and small tracks were seen, and at the foot of the alley a house; so I said to myself, 'The nest of the tall one and short one must be here.'"

"Thank you, my brave fellow. You have rendered me, without knowing it, a great service."

"I beg your pardon; excuse me, Master Rodolphe, but I believe that 's the very reason why I have done it."

"I know it, my good fellow, and I wish that I could recompense you in some other way than by my thanks. Unluckily, I am but a poor devil of a mechanic, although they offer for me, as you say, two thousand francs. I will explain to you why."

"Do it, if you please; if not, 't is all the same to me."

"I imagine what they want: listen. I have a secret to cut ivory fans by a machine, which belongs to me alone. I am waiting for a partner, in order to start the trade, and it must be the model of this machine, which I have in my house, that they wish to lay hold of at any price; for much money may be made by the invention."

"The tall and short one, then——"

"Fan manufactures, for whom I have worked, but to whom I have not revealed my secret."

This explanation appeared very satisfactory to Chourineur, whose mind was not very acute.

"What rascals! they have not courage enough to execute their own wicked stratagems. But to conclude: I said to myself, 'I know the place where Chouette has made an appointment to meet the tall man; I have good legs, and the boss will not want me.' I arrived here, and saw this hole. I went and brought from yonder heap an armful of straw, and covering myself up to my nose, waited for Chouette, until poor Goualeuse came along, and seated herself upon this log. I wished to take her by surprise; and I cried out like a burning man, rising from out the litter."

"But what do you intend to do now?"

"To wait here for Chouette, who will surely come. I shall first try to hear what they say, for it may be of some use to you. There is nothing on the whole plain but this log; from this place one can see far off and all around. This log seems made on purpose to sit down on, and I will bet that they come here. Should not the tall man come, I will fall upon Chouette, and wring her neck until she sings out the name of Goualeuse's parents. What say you to my plan?"

"It's very good; but I must suggest a modification of it," said Rodolphe.

"Do not get into a quarrel on my account, I pray you, Chourineur," said Fleur de Marie; "for if you abuse Chouette, the Schoolmaster——"

"Enough, my girl. Chouette must pass through my hands; and it is precisely because she has got the Schoolmaster to defend her, that I shall double the dose."

"Hear me, my good fellow: I know of a better way to avenge Goualeuse; I will tell you of it some other time," said Rodolphe in a low voice, and moving some distance from Goualeuse; "as for the present, will you do me one favor?"

"Speak, Master Rodolphe."

"Chouette does not know you?"

"I saw her last night for the first time."

"This is what you must do: hide in the first place, but when you see her near your hole, you must leave it——"

"To wring her neck?"

"No; leave that for another time: to-day you must prevent her from speaking with the tall man. When he sees some one near her, he will not dare approach: should he come near, do not leave her one second; he will not dare make his proposal before you."

"If the tall man should think me impertinent, I will fix him: he is neither a Schoolmaster nor a Master Rodolphe."

"I know the fellow; he won't venture to harm you."

"Very well then; I will follow Chouette like her own shadow. The man will not be able to say a word but I shall hear it, and he will decamp."

"Should they agree upon some other place of meeting, you will know it; besides, your presence, I think, will prevent the man from approaching her."

"Good, good! but after that I must give Chouette a drubbing: that I must do in any event."

"Not yet, not yet. Does Chouette know whether you are a thief or not?"

"No, unless the Schoolmaster has told her that thieving was not to my taste."

"If he has told her so, you must pretend that you have changed your principles."

"Who, me?"

"Yes, you."

"Thunder! Master Rodolphe, I do not like this much."

"You only do what it gives you pleasure to do: you will see that I shall propose nothing wrong."

"I am not afraid of that."

"You are right not to be."

"Speak, master, I will obey."

"When the man is out of the way, you must try to coax the old woman."

"What! I coax the old hag! I would rather fight with the Schoolmaster. I do not know yet, how I shall prevent myself from breaking her neck."

"Then we shall lose all."

"But how shall I manage her?"

"Chouette will be furious, on account of losing her five hundred francs. You must endeavor to soothe her, by saying that you know how to turn off a good job yourself, and are waiting here for your accomplice; and that if the Schoolmaster will join you, there is plenty of gold to be made."

"Indeed!"

"After waiting an hour, you will tell her that it will have to be postponed, because your comrade does not come; and then make an appointment with the Schoolmaster and Chouette, to meet you early to-morrow morning. Do you understand?"

"I understand."

"And to-night you must go, at ten o'clock, to the corner of the Champ Elysees and the alley of Veuves, and I will tell you the rest."

"If you are laying a snare you must be careful; for the Schoolmaster is cunning, and will murder you on the least suspicion."

"Don't be fearful."

"Thunder! It is strange; but you do with me just as you please. Something tells me, that there is broth to be drunk by that Schoolmaster and Chouette, yet. But one word more, Master Rodolphe. I do not suspect you of laying a trap, to have the Schoolmaster caught by the police, though he has deserved it a hundred times; but it is not my business to cause him to be arrested."

"Neither is it mine; but I have an account to settle, myself, with the Schoolmaster and Chouette, since they are conspiring to ruin me with those who owe me a grudge; and if you will aid me, I shall be able to avenge myself."

"Well, as the one is no better than the other, I will join you."

"And if we succeed," said Rodolphe, in a serious tone, "you will be as proud as when you rescued the man from the water, and the woman from the fire, who are indebted to you for their lives."

"How you speak those words, Master Rodolphe! I never saw you look so! But haste, haste; I see a white speck yonder, which must be that old witch, Chouette; you must depart, and I must glide into my hole."

"Remember, to-night at 10 o'clock——"

"Yes: corner of the Champ Elysees and the alley of Veuves."

Fleur de Marie, who had not heard the last part of the conversation between Rodolphe and Chourineur, now entered the carriage with her travelling companion.

CHAPTER X..... THE FARM.

After the conversation with Chourineur, Rodolphe remained for several minutes silent and pensive. Fleur de Marie did not venture to disturb the contemplation of her companion, but looked at him with a thoughtful and sympathetic countenance. At length Rodolphe, raising his head, addressed her kindly: "What are your thoughts, my child! has the interview with Chourineur been disagreeable to you! It must have been so, for you were very gay before we met him."

"On the contrary, it has been pleasant to me; for he can be of service to you."

"Was he not regarded, by the customers of the *tapis-franc*, as one who had some remnants of sentiment and good feeling left?"

"I do not know, Mr. Rodolphe; before last night's adventure, I had seen him often, but seldom spoken to him. I thought he was as wicked as the rest."

"We will speak no more of it, my little Fleur de Marie; for I should be unhappy to make you gloomy, when I wished you to spend a delightful day."

"Indeed, I am quite happy; it is so long since I have been out of the city."

"Not since you rode with Rigolette?"

"Even so, Mr. Rodolphe: it was spring then, and now, though almost winter, I enjoy quite as much pleasure. What a beautiful sunshine! Do look at those rosy clouds yonder, sailing in the air, and those pretty white houses surrounded with trees! How thick the leaves still are in the country: this is the month of November, is it not! In Paris, the leaves fall much earlier. Yonder are a flock of doves flying; they are about to light on that wind-mill. In the country one cannot avoid gazing at every thing, it is so delightful."

"It affords me pleasure to see how alive you are to these trifles which constitute the charm of the country."

The young girl contemplated, with an observing eye, the smiling landscape which unfolded itself before her.

"And see, yonder, that straw fire which burns in the ploughed field; what a beautiful white smoke from it is curling up to heaven: and there is the ploughman with a pair of fine gray horses. If I were a man, nothing would please me more than to be a farmer; to be in the midst of a vast plain like this, encircled in woods, and driving a plough during such a day as this, for instance: I could not refrain from singing one of those little melancholy songs like 'Genevieve de Brabant.' Do you know 'Genevieve de Brabant,' Mr. Rodolphe?"

"No; but if you are kind, you will sing it to me when we reach the farm-house."

"What happiness! Are we going to a farm-house!"

"Yes; to a farm kept by my nurse, a good and worthy woman who brought me up."

"And shall we have some milk!" said Goualeuse, clapping her hands together.

"Oh yes; milk and excellent cream, and butter, which the farmer will churn before us, and eggs."

"Eggs! but can we collect them ourselves!"

"Certainly."

"Oh, excellent! And shall we go to the stables, and the dairy, and the dove-cote!"

"To all of them."

"Oh, indeed, Mr. Rodolphe, I can hardly believe it! What a delightful day I shall spend! how happy I shall be!" exclaimed the young girl, overcome with her joys. On a sudden, however, the idea flashing upon her mind that her liberty was only to endure for a few hours, and that the delights of the country must be exchanged for the infected place which she contemplated with so much dread; she covered her face with her hands, and melted into tears.

Rodolphe, in surprise, said: "What grieves you, Fleur de Marie?"

"Nothing, nothing, Mr. Rodolphe," said she, wiping the tears from her eyes and forcing a smile; "pardon me if I am sad take no notice of it, I beg of you; 'twas but a thought. I am now going to be merry."

"But you were so cheerful but a moment since."

"Ah! that was the reason of my tears," said Fleur de Marie.

These words enlightened Rodolphe, as to the nature of her thoughts; and in order to dispel her gloom, he said to her smiling: "I believe you were thinking of your rose-bush; you were regretting that it could not share your ride into the country. Poor rose-bush! you can give it no cream."

Goualeuse improved the jest to force to her face a smile. By degrees, the cloud passed from her brow, and she surrendered herself to the enjoyment of the present hour in forgetfulness of the future. The carriage stopped near Saint Denis.

"What a beautiful spire!" exclaimed Goualeuse.

"It is the steeple of Saint Denis; a beautiful church. Do you wish to see it?"

Fleur de Marie cast down her eyes: "Since I have lived with the ogress," said she, "I never have entered a church; I dare not; but on the contrary, when in prison, I loved much to sing at the celebration of the mass, and to make bouquets for the altar on Easter-day."

"But God is good and merciful: why should we fear to pray to Him, or to enter His holy temple?"

"Oh no, no! Mr. Rodolphe, it would be a sort of impiety; and I have already offended Him in too many other ways."

After a moment's silence, Rodolphe asked her: "Until this time, Fleur de Marie, have you ever loved any one?"

"Never, Mr. Rodolphe."

"Why not?"

"Can one love such people as come to the *tapis-franc*? besides, one must be innocent, in order to love."

"How so?"

"You must have perfect respect for yourself; you must be able——; but I cannot speak of it."

"Be it so, Fleur de Marie; let us speak of other things. But why do you fix upon me such a melancholy look? Now you weep again: have I given you pain?"

"Oh no! no! it is your kindness which brings the tears into my eyes. You seem to speak with such sympathy for me; and then you have brought me here, only for my pleasure, and you seem pleased at seeing me happy. Not content with protecting me last night, you have provided all this delight for me to-day. I shall not forget this happiness for a long time."

"Is happiness so rare?"

"Indeed, it is."

"As for myself," said Rodolphe, "when in want of those things which I do not possess, I frequently amuse myself with imagining what I should like to be; the fortune and destiny which I should desire the most. Do you ever indulge in such dreams, Fleur de Marie? Do you ever build castles in the air?"

"I used to do it, when in prison: I employed all my time with such fancies, and with singing; but since, I have indulged them more rarely. But you, Mr. Rodolphe, what can be your ambition?"

"Oh! I should like to be rich, very rich; have servants, and equipages, a large house, and visit the grandest people; and go to the theatre every evening. Now, what do you wish, Fleur de Marie?"

"I should not be difficult to please. I should wish money enough to pay the ogress, and have a few francs left to support me until I could get employment; a neat pretty little room, from which I could see the trees while sewing——"

"And plenty of flowers in your window."

"Those of course. And then, if I could live in the country, I should have all my desires."

"Money, a little room and work; those are merely necessaries. But as we are only *wishing*, we may allow ourselves a few luxuries. Would you not like a carriage, fine dresses, and jewels?"

"No: I do not wish for so many things. I should be content with the liberty of living in the country, and the luxury of not dying in the hospital! The fear of dying there, is the most frightful thought which assails me."

"Alas! for us poor folks!" said Rodolphe.

"It is not for the distress while living, that I speak it; but after life—when one has died——"

"What then?"

"Do you not know what is done there with the dead? There was a young girl, whom I knew in prison, that died in the hos-

hospital; and they gave up her body to the surgeons," said Fleur de Marie, shuddering.

"Oh, that was horrid! And do you frequently have such a melancholy foreboding?"

"You may be surprised, Mr. Rodolphe, that I should have feelings of shame for my lifeless body. But, alas! *it is the only shame* which is left for me to feel."

These painful and bitter words deeply affected Rodolphe, and he covered his face with his hands. He thought of the fatal destiny which had followed Fleur de Marie; he thought of the mother, who was perhaps rich, happy and respected. Respected! rich! happy! But the child, whom she had inhumanly sacrificed, to hide her own shame, had left Chouette's garret for a prison; the prison for the den of the ogress, whence she might be cast out to breathe her last in the wards of a hospital! and then——the thought was too repulsive to contemplate.

Goualeuse, perceiving the sad expression of Rodolphe's face, said to him with a softened tone: "Pardon me, Mr. Rodolphe; I ought to banish such thoughts. You have taken me with you to be merry, and I have spoken of nothing but the most gloomy subjects. I have done it, almost in spite of myself. I was never happier than to-day, and yet almost every moment I weep. You are not angry with me, I hope! The best part of to-day's sadness is, that it goes almost as soon as it comes. See, now! it has already passed from my mind. I shall think no more of it: I will be reasonable. Look at my eyes, now;" and Fleur de Marie, after having closed her eyes two or three times, to drive away a rebellious tear, opened them very wide, and looked at Rodolphe with the most charming simplicity.

"Do not put any restraint upon yourself, Fleur de Marie; be merry, if you like to be so; sad, if you prefer to be sad. I myself, like you, have at times my gloomy thoughts; and I should be very unhappy, if I was compelled to feign a joy which was not in me."

"True. Mr. Rodolphe, you are very sad sometimes."

"Surely I am: my prospects are not much better than yours. I have no father, no mother: if I am taken sick to-morrow, what shall I do to live? I spend all that I earn from day to day."

"That is wrong; very wrong, Mr. Rodolphe," said Fleur de Marie, in a tone of grave rebuke, which provoked from him a smile. "You should place your money in the Savings' Bank. All my misfortunes came upon me from not having saved my money. With two hundred francs beforehand, a mechanic is never at the mercy of any one, and never in trouble. Want is a very bad counsellor."

"All this is very wise, very rational, my little economist; but pray, how is one to save two hundred francs?"

"It is very simple: let us calculate. You earn sometimes as much as five francs a day, do you not?"

"Yes, on the days when I am employed."

"But you should work every day; the labor cannot be very hard, at such a pretty trade as fan-painting; it is rather a pleasure for you. But you are not reasonable," continued she, in a severe tone; "a mechanic can live, and live very well, at three francs a day; you would then have left forty sous a day—sixty francs a month, which is a very fine sum of money."

"That is true. But then, it is so pleasant to walk about and do nothing."

"Mr. Rodolphe, I say once more, you have no more reason than a child."

"Well, then, I will be more reasonable, little scold! since you have given me such good advice."

"Truly," said the young girl, striking together her hands, "you know not how happy you make me. Will you save forty sous a day, every day?"

"I will save forty sous a day," said Rodolphe, with a smile.

"Upon your honor?"

"I promise it."

"You will see how happy you will be, after your first savings. But there is one other thing, Mr. Rodolphe; if you will promise not to be angry with me."

"Do I look angry?"

"Certainly not: but I do not know whether I should tell you."

"You ought to tell me all, Fleur de Marie."

"Well, then, you are so——; in short, it is plain that you are above your trade. Why do you frequent such taverns as that of the ogress?"

"Had I not gone to the *tapis-franc*, I should not now have had the pleasure of riding in the country, with Mademoiselle Fleur de Marie."

"That is very true. But happy as it has made me, I would have foregone all the pleasure I have enjoyed, if I thought it could do you any harm."

"On the contrary, the excellent advice which you have given me, will be of the greatest service hereafter."

"Will you follow it, then?"

"I have promised you, on my honor, to save forty sous a day."

CHAPTER XI. ..... THE WISHES.

Our travellers had now passed through the village of Sarcelles; and Rodolphe told the coachman to take the first road to the right, and, after passing through Villiers-le-Bel, to take the road to the left and go straight ahead; and then addressing Goualeuse, said: "Now that you are pleased with me, Fleur de Marie, we can amuse ourselves, as I said a while ago, with building castles in the air. As it will cost nothing, you won't have to reproach me for the expense."

"Well, let us build our castles."

"You begin, Fleur de Marie."

"See if you can guess my taste, Mr. Rodolphe."

"I will try. Suppose that this road—I say this road, because we happen to be on it——"

"Just so: it isn't necessary to look far off."

"Suppose, I say, this road takes us to a charming village, far distant from the main road."

"Yes: it must be a very quiet one."

"The village built on a declivity of a hill, sprinkled with many trees——"

"By the side of a small river."

"Just so," said Rodolphe; "and at the end of the village, a pretty farm-house must be seen; on one side of the house there must be a fine orchard; on the other, a garden filled with flowers."

"Methinks I see it now," said Fleur de Marie.

"On the first floor of the house, there must be a large kitchen for the domestics, and a drawing-room for the farmer's wife."

"The house should have green blinds, Mr. Rodolphe; those make it so cheerful."

"Green blinds to be sure; I am of your mind, nothing is more cheerful. Of course, the farmer's wife must be your aunt."

"Of course, and a very good woman!"

"Oh yes; an excellent woman, who loves you as if you were her child."

"Kind aunt! how delightful it must be to be loved by such a one."

"And you returning her love, of course."

"Oh yes!" said Fleur de Marie, clasping her hands, and raising her eyes to heaven, with an indescribable expression of countenance. "Oh yes! how I would love her, and aid her in her work! sew, wash, gather the fruit in winter, and put the house in order. She should find no fault with me for my idleness. In the morning——"

"But wait a moment, Fleur de Marie," said Rodolphe; "you are too impatient. I have not finished describing the house."

"Go on, Mr. Artist; I see you are accustomed to paint fine landscapes on your fans."

"You little prattler! let me finish my house."

"'Tis true, I prattle; it is so amusing. But finish the farm-house: I am listening to you."

"Your room is on the second floor."

"My room! excellent! Let me see my room?" exclaimed she, her eyes sparkling with curiosity.

"Your room has two windows in it, which open to the flower garden, through a field, at the end of which flows the little stream. On the other side of the stream ascends a hill, all covered with old chestnut trees, in the midst of which you can discern the steeple of the church."

"How pretty! how very pretty it is! I only wish I was there."

"Three or four cows are grazing in the field, which is separated from the garden by a hawthorn hedge."

"And from the window I can see the cows?"

"Perfectly well."

"One of them must be my pet, Mr. Rodolphe. I will make for her a beautiful collar, with a bell, and teach her to come and eat out of my hand."

"She will not fail to do so—she is all white, quite young, and her name is Musette."

"What a beautiful name! poor Musette, how I love her!"

"We will furnish your room, Fleur de Marie, with lilac hangings, and curtains to match; a large rose-bush, and an enormous honeysuckle cover the walls of the house on that side, and hang over your windows; so that every morning, you only have to stretch out your hand and gather a fine bouquet."

"What a beautiful painter you are, Mr. Rodolphe."

"Now, this is the way you spend your day."

"Oh! let me hear how I spend my day!"

"Your good aunt wakes you up by a tender kiss on your forehead; she will bring you a bowl of milk, quite warm, because you have a cough, poor child! You then dress yourself, and go and take a short walk upon the farm: you see Musette; the chickens; your friends, the doves; the flowers, of course; and at nine o'clock, your writing-master comes."

"My writing-master!"

"We must suppose that you will have to learn to read, write, and count, to assist your aunt in keeping the accounts of the farm."

"True, Mr. Rodolphe; but I did not think of that. I must learn to write to assist my aunt," said the poor girl, seriously, so absorbed in the fanciful description of this peaceful life, that it had all the appearance of reality.

"After your lesson you sew; you work for yourself a beautiful peasant's cap. At about two o'clock, you practice writing again, and then go with your aunt to take a walk; to see the reapers in summer, the harvesters in the autumn; until you are quite fatigued, when you return, and bring back an armful of grass selected by you for dear Musette."

"We come back through the meadow, do we not, Mr. Rodolphe?"

"To be sure: there is a wooden bridge over the river. When you return, it is about six or seven o'clock; at this time, a good cheerful fire would burn in the large kitchen; you would warm yourself by it, and talk for a moment with the laborers who are taking their supper; and afterward go in and dine with your aunt. Sometimes the curate, or some old friend of the family, will dine with you. After dinner, you read, or sew, while your aunt is playing a game of cards with the curate. At ten o'clock, she kisses you good-night, and you go to your room; and the next morning you do the same all over again."

"Oh! one could live in that manner for a hundred years, without being for a moment weary. But what do I do on Sundays and festival days?"

"Why, you make yourself look very pretty: you put on a fine country dress, with a pretty round cap, that fits you sweetly, and get into the wagon; and with your aunt, and James, the farm-boy, go to church in the village. In the summer, you will not fail to attend all the festivals in the neighborhood, in company with your aunt. You are so gentle, so pretty, such a nice little housekeeper; your aunt loves you so much, the curate speaks so well of you, that all the young farmers around ask you to dance with them—for it is in this way that marriages begin—until, by degress, you observe one in particular, who——"

Rodolphe, surprised at Goualeuse's silence, looked at her: the poor girl's eyes were filled with tears, and it was with difficulty that she restrained her sobs. Deceived for a moment, by Rodolphe's picture, she had forgotten the actual; but the contrast of *her* actual, with the sweet and smiling existence which he had painted, brought too forcibly to her mind the horrors of her situation.

"What ails you, Goualeuse?"

"Oh! Mr. Rodolphe, without designing it, you have caused me great pain. I believed for a while in that paradise."

"Believe in it still, Fleur de Marie: look up! The coachman stops! that paradise is an actual reality!"

Goualeuse languidly raised her head: they were on the summit of a hill. How overwhelmed was she with astonishment and surprise! The pretty village built upon the hill—the farm, the garden, the field, the fine cows, the little stream, the old chestnut trees, with the steeple in the distance—the fancied scene was actually before her. Nothing was wanting: even Musette, a snow-white heifer, the destined pet of Goualeuse, was grazing in the meadow. A bright November sun lighted up the landscape, and the yellow and purple leaves of the chestnut trees stood out, in fine relief, against the azure sky.

"Well! now, Fleur de Marie, do you say that I am a good painter?"

Goualeuse looked at him with surprise, mingled with almost supernatural terror. "Am I in a dream, Mr. Rodolphe? How can this be?"

"Nothing is more simple, my child. The farmer's wife who lives here is my nurse. I wrote to her this morning that I was coming to pay her a visit. I was merely painting from nature."

"Oh! that explains it, Mr. Rodolphe," said Goualeuse, with a deep sigh.

CHAPTER XII. ..... THE FARM.

THE farm, to which Rodolphe had conducted Fleur de Marie, was situated at the extremity of the village of Bouqueval, a small, solitary parish lying back from the road, about six miles from Ecouen. The carriage, by Rodolphe's direction, descended a steep road, and entered a long avenue bordered with cherry and apple trees; and the wheels rolled noiselessly along over a carpet of green turf, which usually covers the by-roads. Fleur de Marie, mournful and silent, was still under the influence of the strong impression of contrast which Rodolphe's picture had produced, so that he almost reproached himself for having called it into existence. In a few moments the carriage passed through the gate of the farm, proceeded along by the side of a thick hedge, and stopped opposite a rural portico, almost hid by a large grape-vine with autumn-tinged leaves.

"We have arrived, Fleur de Marie," said Rodolphe; "are you not glad?"

"Yes; but I shall be so ashamed in the presence of the farmer's wife."

"Oh no! you will not."

"I believe you are right: she does not know me," said Goualeuse, suppressing a sigh.

The inmates of the farm-house had evidently been expecting the arrival of Rodolphe. The coachman was opening the door, when a female of about fifty years, dressed as rich farmers' wives generally are in the environs of Paris, with a countenance sad, and at the same time mild, made her appearance at the portico, and advanced to meet Rodolphe with respectful eagerness. Goualeuse blushed, and alighted from the carriage, after some hesitation.

"Good day, my good Madam George," said Rodolphe to the farmer's wife;* "you see I am punctual." Then, turning to the coachman, and putting some money into his hands, said, "You may return to Paris." The coachman, a diminutive man, with his hat drawn over his brows, and his face concealed by the fur collar of his coat, said nothing, but pocketed his money jumped on to his seat, whipped his horses, and disappeared.

"This mute coachman is in great haste to return to Paris, after so long a ride," thought Rodolphe; "but as it is only two o'clock, he may wish to be in there early enough to turn to some advantage the remainder of the day;" and with this solution, the circumstance passed from his mind.

"Oh! Mr. Rodolphe," said Goualeuse, "pardon me, but you have sent back the carriage. Alas! I must return to the house of the ogress to-night, or she will think that I am a thief: these clothes belong to her. I owe her money besides."

"Be calm, my child. It belongs to me to ask your pardon."

"Pardon!"

"Yes: for not telling you before, that you no longer owe the ogress anything; and you may exchange those degraded garments, for some that Madam George will give you. You see she begins to play the aunt's part already." Fleur de Marie, scarcely conscious whether she was dreaming or not, looked alternately at Rodolphe and Madam George, scarcely able to believe what she had heard; and finally said, with a trembling voice, "Am I not to return to Paris? can I stay here? will madam permit me? Is it possible that the castle in the air——"

"Is a reality? This is the farm."

"Oh no; I cannot believe it! It would be too delightful—too much happiness."

"Too much happiness we cannot have, Fleur de Marie."

"Have pity on me, Mr. Rodolphe, and do not deceive me: the transition would be too painful."

"My dear child, believe me," said Rodolphe, in a tone always affectionate, but with an accent of great seriousness; "you may here, if you please, from this day, under the protection of Madam George, realize that peaceful life, the picture of which gave you so much pleasure in fancying. Madam George is not your aunt; but when she knows you, will have the tenderest interest for you. You will even pass with the people connected with the farm, as her niece: the little deception will make your position more agreeable—once more, Fleur de Marie, you may realize your dream. After you have put on your peasant's dress," added he, smiling, "we will go and see Musette, who waits only for the collar you promised her. We will visit the dairy and the doves, and walk over the farm: I mean to keep my promise."

Fleur de Marie convulsively joined her hands: respect, joy, gratitude beamed from her enraptured countenance. Her eyes were bathed in tears, as she said, "You must be an angel, Mr Rodolphe, sent to rescue unfortunate beings from their shame and misery."

"My poor child," replied Rodolphe, "although young, I have suffered much myself, which will explain to you my sympathy for those who suffer. Go now, Fleur de Marie, or rather Marie, for so you must henceforth be called with Madam George. Be-

* This is not the exact meaning of *fermière*; it means farming woman

fore I leave, we will talk together: I shall not be happy unless I know that you are happy." Marie did not reply, but approaching Rodolphe, bent one knee to the ground, and taking his hand, carried it to her lips, with an air of charming grace and simplicity. She then followed Madam George, who had been contemplating her with great interest."

CHAPTER XIII..... MURPH AND RODOLPHE.

Rodolphe directed his steps to the farm-yard, where he met a tall and athletic individual—the disguised coalman of the previous evening. Murph was fifty years of age, his head partly bald, and the few locks which remained, slightly silvered; a broad, full face, on which a short red pair of whiskers were seen; and in spite of his age and weight, seemed active and robust. His countenance, although phlegmatic, was firm and resolute. He wore a white cravat, a long vest, a black coat with broad skirts, and gray trowsers which reached to gaiters of the same color, fastened with mother-of-pearl buttons. Indeed, his whole appearance indicated that he was an English farmer of the higher class. He was, in fact, an English squire. When Rodolphe first saw him, he was placing in the pocket of a travelling-gig a pair of pistols, which he had been cleaning with great care.

"Whom are you going to quarrel with?" said Rodolphe.

"That concerns me, my lord; attend to your own affairs, and I will attend to mine."

"Did you arrive here this morning?"

"At 8 o'clock. Madam George had time to arrange everything according to your directions."

"You don't seem to be in very pleasant humor to-day."

"It is very true, my lord. The danger to which you are constantly exposing your life is too vexatious."

"It becomes you to talk so. If I allowed you to act, the danger would only be to yourself, and——"

"But where would be the harm of doing good, without venturing your life, my lord?"

"But where would be the pleasure, Master Murph?"

"The idea of you! of *you!*" said the squire, heaving up his shoulders, "being found in such a tavern!"

"Oh! there you are, John Bull, with your aristocratic scruples, believing that great lords are of an essence superior to your own."

"If you were an Englishman, my lord, you would know this: we honor those that honor us. But were I a Turk, a Chinese, or an American, I would protest against your exposing your life in this manner. Nothing but the fear of your positive displeasure, prevented me from interfering in your fight with the bandit, in the abominable streets of the Cité, where we were hunting after Red-arm—the devil take him!"

"That is to say, Mr. Murph, you doubted my strength and courage?"

"Unhappily, you have given me too many proofs to doubt either. Crabb, of Ramsgate, taught you to box; Lacour, of Paris, the use of the stick; the famous Bertrand taught you fencing; and you had the pleasure of beating all your teachers in their several accomplishments. Where you learnt to talk slang, the devil only knows. You can kill a flying swallow with your pistol, and though your form is slight, your muscles are of iron. For these attainments, the Lord be praised! You can whip me as easy as a blood-horse can beat a dray-horse in a race."

Rodolphe listened, with much complacency, to this enumeration of his gladiatorial accomplishments.

"What, then, are you afraid of?"

"I maintain, my lord, that it is not becoming in you to engage in a fisticuff fight with these villains. I say nothing of compelling a gentleman of my standing to blacken his face with coal, so as to look like Satan; in spite of my weight, my years, and the gravity of my character, I would disguise myself as a rope-dancer, if it would be of any service to you; but I still adhere to what I have said."

"Oh, I know it well, old Murph. When once an idea gets riveted in your skull, or devotion implanted in your firm heart, 'twould puzzle the devil to get either of them out."

"You flatter me, my lord. You must be meditating some folly."

"My poor Murph, you take a bad place to lecture me. I am in one of my proud, happy moods, in a place where I have done good."

"If such is a bad place to lecture, *what* place can I find?"

"You flatter, Mr. Murph; you must be meditating some folly?" said Rodolphe, laughing.

"There are follies of which I am indulgent."

"The follies of spending money?"

"Yes; for with an income of two million francs——"

"We are often much embarrassed."

"To whom do you say that, my lord?" said Murph, laughing. "And yet there are pleasures, so sensible, so pure, so profound, which cost us but little. What can be compared with that which I have just felt, when this poor creature, finding herself in safety here, kissed my hand! This is not all; my happiness has a long futurity. To-morrow, the day after, for many weeks, I can recur with delight to the feelings of the poor child, when she wakes up in this quiet retreat, with the excellent Madam George for her companion, who will love her most tenderly. The miserable always sympathize with the miserable."

"Oh! as for Madam George, never was kindness better bestowed. She is a noble, courageous woman, and a pattern of virtue. Although I am seldom moved, her misfortunes affect me; but as to your new protegé, the less we say of her the better."

"What do you mean, Mr. Murph?"

"My lord, you do what is agreeable to yourself."

"I do what is just," said Rodolphe, with a slight frown of displeasure.

"What is just according to your own judgment."

"What is just in the sight of God and my own conscience," replied Rodolphe, with severity.

"As we shall probably not agree, let us speak no more on the subject, my lord."

"And I order you to speak!" cried Rodolphe, imperiously.

"I never exposed myself to be ordered to keep silence: I hope you will not command me to speak," replied Murph, haughtily.

"You know I do not like concealment," cried Rodolphe, with increased irritation.

"And it pleases me to have concealment," said Murph, roughly.

"Learn, sir, that if I descend to familiarity with you, it is that you may elevate yourself to frankness," said Rodolphe, with a haughty pride of tone and countenance, which it is impossible to depict.

"My lord, I am fifty years of age, and a gentleman; you ought not to speak to me thus."

"Silence!"

"My lord——"

"Silence!"

"It is unkind, my lord, to compel a man of sensibility to recall the services which he has rendered."

"Your services! Do I not pay them in every way?"

Rodolphe did not mean, by these words, that Murph's services were mercenary; but he unfortunately put that humiliating construction upon them. He blushed with shame; he carried his clenched fist to his forehead, with an expression of the most painful indignation; then, all at once, by a sudden change, as his eye fell upon the noble features of Rodolphe, distorted by disdain, he conveyed by his looks the most tender commiseration, as he said, suppressing a sigh, "My lord, recover yourself; you are not rational."

These words raised to its highest pitch the resentment of Rodolphe; his eye sparkled with an unnatural light, his lips became pallid, and, advancing toward Murph with a threatening gesture, said; "How dare you!"

Murph moved back and said to him sharply, "Remember *the thirteenth day of January*, my lord!"

These words produced a magical effect upon Rodolphe. His face, which had been convulsed with his angry passions, became calm; he fastened his gaze upon Murph, hung his head in silence, and after a moment, said, in an altered voice, "Sir, you are too cruel. I thought, however —— and you! you again! ——Rodolphe could not finish the sentence, but fell upon the stone bench, and buried his face in his hands.

"My lord!" exclaimed Murph, in great grief—"my lord, pardon me; pardon your old and faithful Murph. I only uttered those words because driven to it by the fear of the consequences of your passion. I uttered them in kindness and compassion. Who should know your disposition but myself, who have been constantly with you from your childhood? I beg of you, I entreat you to forgive me, for recalling to your memory that fatal day! What expiations have you not made ——"

Rodolphe was very pale, as he raised his head, and said to his companion in a subdued and mild tone, "Enough! enough! my old friend; I thank you for having extinguished my fatal frenzy. I need not apologise for having spoken harshly to you; *it is far from the lips to the heart*, as they say in my country: forgive me. I was mad, let us speak no more of it."

"Alas! now you will be gloomy for a month, and I, who de-

sire nothing more than to to wean you from this melancholy humor, am constantly driving you into it by my foolish susceptibility. What is the use of gray hair if one cannot endure unmerited reproaches? But no," continued Murph, with an excitement which contrasted comically with his usual phlegm, "you must be flattered daily; you must be told 'you are the most faithful of servants, Murph;' 'there is no fidelity comparable with yours, Mr. Murph;' 'what an excellent man; how beautiful and brave! Mr. Murph,' I am a perfect old parrot, whose gray head must be constantly tickled! And this too," said he, with grotesque violence, recalling to mind the commencement of the conversation, "after he had called me his old, his good, his devoted Murph. Why, I have behaved like a perfect brute; it is enough to make me tear out my hair:" and the worthy Squire carried his hands to his temples.

These words, and this gesture, were always an invariable sign that the despair of Murph had roached its highest paroxysm. He was fortunately almost bald, and this attack upon his locks was always entirely ineffectual. When, therefore, his hands glided from his smooth head without uprooting any hair, he seemed almost to view it with regret, as convicting him of an unworthy exaggeration of the strength of his feelings, and a swaggering braggadocio manifestation of despair. To exculpate him however, from this suspicion, we must state that he formerly had one of the finest crops of golden hair that ever ornamented the skull of a Yorkshire Squire. Murph's disappointment in tearing out his hair was usually irresistibly amusing to Rodolphe, but his reflections now were too painful to be dissipated. Wishing, however, to soothe his companion's remorse, he said to him smiling: "Hear me, my good Murph! you seemed to praise, without any reservation, the kindness which I have shown to Madam George, but were astonished at my interest for this poor young girl."

"My lord, spare me, I beg of you. I was wrong! I was wrong!"

"Not at all, my good sir; I think you may have been deceived by appearances; and as you have assisted me in this task with great courage and fidelity, both my sense of duty and gratitude demand, that I should convince you that I am not acting with levity.'

"I know it, my lord."

"You are aware of my somewhat peculiar views in regard to the good which a man may do. To succor honorable misfortune, is very well; to search out those who struggle with energy against vice, to come to their aid unbeknown, and avert in time the force of that temptation which leads to crime, is far better; but to raise in their own estimation, and finally reform entirely, those who have retained some pure and generous sentiment in the midst of the disgrace which withers, the misery which devours, and the corruption which surrounds them; and for this object, to brave contact with that misery and corruption, is more exalted than either. To pursue with vigorous and implacable hatred, vice, infamy and crime, whether it lurks in rags or luxuriates in satin, is but justice; but to assist hardened and deserved misery—to degrade charity and pity, by lavishing those pure and holy consolations of my afflicted soul upon unworthy and infamous beings—would be horrible, impious, sacrilegious! It would cause the wretched to doubt in a God; and he who relieves should make them believe in Him."

"My lord, I did not mean that you had lavished your kindness unworthily."

"One word more, my old friend. Madam George, and this poor girl I have confided to her care, started from the two extremes of fortune to fall into the common abyss of misery; the one, happy, respected, loved, rich, adorned with all the virtues that can exalt, has seen her existence withered, broken down, and annihilated, by the wretch and hypocrite to whom her insane parents married her. With joy I say it, that without me the unfortunate woman would have perished from her misery and want; for she was too proud to make her wretchedness known to any one."

"Oh! yes, my lord; when we entered her miserable room, her poverty was frightful—absolutely frightful! and when, after her long sickness, she woke up, as I might say, in this abode, so quiet and so peaceful, what surprise and gratitude did she not evince! You are right, Mr. Rodolphe; such misfortune relieved, forces one to believe in the existence of a God."

"Yes; to assist the poor is to honor God. I know of nothing more celestial, more entitled to our reverence, than the serene and reflected virtue of a female like Madam George, who, brought up by a pious mother, has persevered in the faithful and intelligent practice of every religious duty, while courageously enduring the most frightful trials: but is it not to honor God, in his most divine attribute, to draw from the depths of corruption one of those rare beings whom He has been pleased to adorn? Has the unfortunate child no claim upon our pity, our interest, our respect, who, abandoned to her instincts alone, tortured, imprisoned, defiled, has religiously preserved in her heart those germs of virtue implanted by her Maker? If you could have seen how, at the first glance of kindness—at the first word of friendship, the most charming instincts, the most refined tastes, the most spiritual thoughts, the most poetical sentiments, were aroused, unconsciously to herself, within the ingenuous soul of the poor creature, as the first ray of the spring sun awakens myriads of wild flowers in the wood! Yes; in an hour's conversation with her as a poor mechanic, I have discovered in Fleur de Marie treasures of sense, grace, goodness, and virtue—yes, of virtue, my old Murph. A smile came upon my lips and a tear into my eye, when in her pretty prattling manner, mingled with great sense, she proved that I ought to lay up forty sous a-day, in order that I may be above want and above temptation. Poor little one! she said it to me in so serious a tone; she felt so sweet a satisfaction in giving me good advice, and such pleasure in hearing me promise that I would follow it, that I was affected—affected even to tears; and yet I am accused of being *blasé*, stern, inflexible. No, no; thanks be to God! I yet feel at times my heart alive with generosity. But you, yourself! you are affected also, my old friend. Fleur de Marie will not be jealous of the interest you take in Madam George; you will take an interest in *her* also."

"'Tis true, my lord; 'tis the thought of her trying to make you save forty sous a-day, instead of encouraging you to run into expenses for herself."

"And when I think, too, that the unfortunate girl has a mother, who, though rich and respected, has inhumanly abandoned her! If it is so, I shall know it—I shall know it; and wo! wo to the woman! she shall suffer a terrible retribution! Murph, Murph, never have I felt so inveterate a hatred as toward that woman. Certain passions, you know, are very dear to me; certain sufferings very precious; I am thirsty for certain tears."

"Alas!" said Murph, afflicted with the fiendish expression of Rodolphe's face, "I know well, that those who have enlisted in favor of themselves your interest, call you a good angel; while those who deserve your contempt and hatred, say, 'it is the devil.'"

"Enough: here is Madam George with Marie. Have everything prepared for our departure: we must be in Paris early."

CHAPTER XIV..... ADIEUX.

Thanks to Madam George, the appearance of Marie was so entirely changed that she could hardly be recognized. A pretty round peasant's cap covered her head, from beneath which two auburn tresses fell down over the innocent face of the girl. A broad white muslin handkerchief crossed over her bosom, and disappeared beneath a small apron of changeable silk, the blue and pink shades of which were reflected from a dark Carmelite gown, that fitted admirably her graceful form. The countenance of the happy child was sad and subdued: certain kinds of felicity induce a pleasing sadness and an agreeable melancholy. Rodolphe was prepared for the gravity of Marie's deportment; and had she been joyous and pert, his respect for her would have diminished. With perfect tact, he offered not the least compliment to her beauty, which in that dress, however, was unusually striking and brilliant; for he felt that there was something sacred and august in the enfranchisement of a soul from vice.

On Madam George's serious and resigned face could be discovered the traces of long suffering, of bitter mortification, and heart-seated sorrow. She already regarded Marie with a kindness and compassion almost maternal, so heart-touching was the grace and gentleness of the young girl. "Here is my child, come to thank you for your kindness," said she, presenting Marie to Rodolphe. At these words, 'my child,' Gonaleuse turned slowly her large eyes toward her protectress, and regarded her for a few moments with a sentiment of inexpressible gratitude.

"I thank you, for Marie's sake, my dear Madam George. She is, I assure you, worthy of your tenderest regard, and will always deserve it."

"Mr. Rodolphe," said Marie, "you understand, do you not, why I cannot express my gratitude?"

"Your emotion expresses it better than words."

"She feels," said Madam George, "how providential is the happiness which has befallen her. Her first movement, upon entering my chamber, was to fall upon her knees before the crucifix there."

"You, thanks to you, Mr. Rodolphe, I dare pray."

Murph wheeled fast around: his English phlegm and his

manly pride would not permit him to reveal how much he was moved by the artless words of Marie.

"My child, I have many things to say to Madam George. My friend Murph will take you round the farm, and make you acquainted with your future pets. Murph, Murph, do you not hear me?"

The good gentleman had turned his back under the pretence of blowing his nose, which he did in a most sonorous manner. He returned his handkerchief to his pocket, pulled down his hat over his brow, and then half turning his face, offered his arm to Marie. Murph had used all this management, in order that neither Rodolphe nor Madam George might see his face. Taking Marie's arm in his own, he hurried rapidly in the direction of the offices of the farm, walking so quickly that Goualeuse was obliged to run, as she did in her infancy when walking with Chouette.

"Well, Madam George, what do you think of Marie?"

"I have told you, Mr. Rodolphe, that she had scarcely entered my chamber, when, seeing my crucifix, she ran to kneel down. I cannot express to you all there was of self-moved and natural piety in that movement. I understood at once that her soul was pure. Besides, Mr. Rodolphe, her expressions of gratitude to you were not overcharged and noisy, but silent and sincere. One word will prove to you how powerful the religious instinct is in her: I said to her, 'You must have been very much surprised and delighted, when Mr. Rodolphe told you, that for the future you could remain in this place; what a deep impression it must have produced!' 'Oh yes,' she replied; 'when he informed me of it, I cannot describe all the emotions which passed through my mind; but I felt that sort of devotion and reverence that I used to feel when I entered a church—when I *dared* to enter one; for you know, Madam George——' I did not permit her to finish the sentence, for I observed that her face was covered with blushes. 'I know it, my child,' said I; 'and I will hereafter, if you will permit me, call you my child. I know that you have suffered much; but God blesses those who love Him and those who fear Him, those who have been miserable and those who repent.'"

"I am highly delighted, my good Madam George, with what I have done. The poor child cannot fail to interest you; you have judged her correctly; her instincts are excellent, and you have only to sow in order to reap."

"What has pleased me the most is, that she did not take the liberty of asking a single question in regard to you, although her curiosity must have been powerfully excited. I think that such reserve evinces great delicacy. I wished to know if she was herself conscious of it, and said to her, 'You must be very anxious to know who your mysterious benefactor is.' 'I know him,' replied she, with charming frankness; 'his name is 'my benefactor.'"

"You will love her, then, my excellent friend. She will be society for you; she will engross, at least, a portion of your heart," said Rodolphe.

"I will watch over *her* in the same manner that I would have watched over *him*," said Madam George, in a melting tone of voice.

Rodolphe took her hand: "Come, come," said he, "do not despair yet. It is true, that we have searched for *him* in vain until now, but perhaps a day will come——"

Madam George shook her head, and said, with much bitterness, "My poor son would now be twenty years of age."

"Say rather that he *is* twenty."

"May God hear you, and grant your prayer, Mr. Rodolphe."

"He will grant it. I went yesterday to see a certain rogue, called Bras-rouge—Red-arm—whom I was encouraged to hope might give me some information concerning your son. In returning from Red-arm's house, I met with this unhappy child."

"I am thankful, that while aiding me, such good fortune was thrown in your path."

"I have been, for a long time, anxious to explore the lower grades of society, and to rescue some souls from their Evil Adversary; whom I take great pleasure in disappointing," said Rodolphe, smiling, "and from whom I have taken some of his surest victims. But have you heard nothing from Rochefort recently?" asked Rodolphe, in a more serious tone.

"Nothing," said Madam George, shuddering.

"'Tis well; the monster has perhaps perished in the mud, while he was making his escape. His person is so well known, and his crimes have been so atrocious, that every activity must have been put in requisition in order to discover him; and since six months have elapsed since he escaped from the—the——"

"The bagnio! speak it out, Mr. Rodolphe," said the unfortunate woman, in a tone of almost frenzied grief. "If the father of my boy is still living, and has not, like myself, changed his name—what shame! what infamy! and that perhaps is not the worst—his father may have fulfilled his horrible oath! Oh! Mr. Rodolphe, in spite of the benefits that you have heaped upon me, I am still very unhappy."

"Be calm! be calm! my good lady."

"I am sometimes filled with terrible fears. I imagine that my husband has escaped from Rochefort, and that he is seeking me in order to kill me, as he has killed my son, for how can he have disposed of him? what has he done with him?"

"My mind is now engaged in fathoming the mystery," said Rodolphe, with a thoughtful air. "When, fifteen years ago, the wretch intended to start for foreign lands, what motive could he have had in carrying away your son? A child of that tender age could only have retarded his flight."

"Alas! Mr. Rodolphe, when my husband—" and Madam George shuddered while pronouncing the word—"was arrested on the frontier, and brought to Paris, and there thrown into prison, I was permitted to see him, and he spoke to me these dreadful words: 'I have carried away your son because you love him, and that will force you to send me money; whether I give it to him or not, will be just as I please. I care not whether he lives or dies; but if he lives, I will place him in very good hands, and you shall drink the cup of shame for the son, as you have drank it for the father.' In a few moments after, he was sentenced to the galleys for life. From that time he has been deaf to the entreaties, to the earnest prayers, with which my letters have been filled. I never could learn one word respecting the fate of my child. Alas! Mr. Rodolphe, where is he now? These terrible words continually haunt my mind: 'you shall drink the cup of shame for the son, as you have drank it for the father.'"

"But it would be an unheard of, an unaccountable atrocity, for him to vitiate and corrupt the boy; and I cannot comprehend why he took him from you."

"Have I not told you, that it was to extort money from me? for the remnants of property which he had dissipated were not then, as they are now, entirely gone. In spite of his wickedness, I was in hopes that he would spend some portion of the money which I sent in educating my boy."

"Had your son no peculiarity, no mark by which he may be recognized?"

"None, but what I have told you: he wore around his neck, attached to a silver chain, a small Saint Esprit, carved out of *lapis lazuli*. The relic was consecrated by the holy father; it descended to me from my mother, who regarded it with great veneration. I also had worn it, and placed it around my son's neck. Alas! the talisman has lost all its virtue."

"God is all-powerful, good mother."

"Has not He placed me in your path, Mr. Rodolphe?"

"Too late! too late, I fear, Madam George. At an earlier period I might have saved you from years of misery."

"What have you not done for me, Mr. Rodolphe?"

"Why, what have I done? I have purchased a farm. In the days of your prosperity, you farmed for your own pleasure; you now have become my tenant, and thanks to your excellent care and intelligent industry, the farm is yielding me profits."

"Yield *you* profits! Do I not pay over all the proceeds of the farm to our good curate, the Abbé Laporte, who distributes it according to your directions to the poor?"

"And is not that an excellent income? But have you informed the good Abbé of my arrival? I must recommend my protegé to his care. Has he not received my letter?"

"Mr. Murph delivered it to him this morning."

"In that letter I gave him a short sketch of Marie's history. I was not certain that I could come with her to-day. In that event, Mr. Murph would have conducted her here."

A farm-boy now interrupted this conversation, which had taken place in the garden, with the information that Abbé Laporte had arrived.

"Have the post-horses come, my boy?" asked Rodolphe.

"Yes, Mr. Rodolphe; they are now putting the harness on them;" and the valet disappeared.

Madam George, the curate, and the inmates of the farm, did not know the benefactor of Fleur de Marie by any other name than Rodolphe. Murph's discretion never failed him. However particular he was in addressing him as "my lord" during their private interviews, he always called him Mr. Rodolphe in the presence of strangers.

"I forgot to inform you, my dear Madam George," said Rodolphe, as they were walking toward the house, "that Marie has very weak lungs; privation and misery have injured her constitution. This morning I could not but notice the pallor of her complexion. Although there was a flush upon her cheeks, her eyes also have an unnatural brilliancy. She will need the greatest care."

"You may rely upon me, Mr. Rodolphe. God be thanked, there is nothing serious in her complaints; and the country air, with repose and contentment, will soon remove all traces of disease from one of her age."

"I believe so; but as I have a poor opinion of country physicians, I will order Murph to provide her with the best of medical attendance, and the course will be marked out for us to pursue. In the course of a few days, when she has recovered from the excitement of a change of situation, you will inform me, and we will consult together respecting her future welfare. Perhaps it will be best for her to remain permanently with you."

"Such is my desire, Mr. Rodolphe: she will fill the place in my heart which my son has left vacant."

"In short, let us hope for her; let us hope for yourself."

By the time Rodolphe and Madam George had reached the house, Murph and Marie had also returned from their walk. Marie was excited by the exercise; and Rodolphe called Madam George's attention to the small, well-defined flush on the young girl's cheeks, which contrasted in so striking a manner with the delicate paleness of her complexion. The worthy squire surrendered Goualeuse's arm, and with an almost embarrassed air, said to Rodolphe: "The little girl has bewitched me. I know not which to admire the most, your protegé or Madam George. What an insensible brute I was!"

"Don't tear your hair on account of it, old Murph," said Rodolphe, smiling as he pressed his hands.

Madam George, with Marie leaning on her arm, entered with her into the little parlor on the first floor, where the Abbé Laporte had seated himself. Murph went to superintend the preparations for departure. Madam George, Marie, Rodolphe and the curate, remained together.

The little parlor was plainly and comfortably furnished, and hung, like the rest of the house, with lilac curtains, so exactly described to Goualeuse by Rodolphe. A thick carpet covered the floor, a good fire burned upon the hearth, and two large bouquets of variegated china-asters, from glass vases, imparted a slight, balmy fragrance to the atmosphere. Through the half-closed blinds could be discerned the meadow, stretching along the bank of the small rivulet, and beyond it the hill, thickly covered with chestnut trees. The Abbé Laporte, a man of fourscore years, was seated near the door. Since the last days of the revolution, he had ministered to the spiritual wants of this small parish. Nothing can be imagined more placid and venerable, than his peaceful physiognomy, pale and emaciated, with his long white hair falling on the black collar of his well-patched cassock; for the Abbé said that he preferred to provide two or three small children with good warm clothing, than play the fop, by purchasing a new cassock oftener than once in three years. The hands of the good Abbé trembled with age, and, as he occasionally raised them during conversation, it appeared very much as if he was imparting a benediction. Had Rodolphe been less thoroughly intimate with the operation of Marie's mind, he would have been astonished at seeing her approach the Abbé with so much pious serenity. Her admirable instinct informed her, that disgrace terminates when repentance and expiation commence.

"Monsieur Abbé," said Rodolphe respectfully, "Madam George is willing to superintend this young girl, for whom I solicit also your kindness."

"She has claims to it, sir, as all have who approach within its influence. The mercy of God is inexhaustible, my daughter; as He has given abundant proof, by not abandoning you during your grievous trials. I have heard of them all;" and he clasped Marie's hand with his own venerable and trembling fingers. "The Lord has fulfilled His own promise, by means of the generous individual who has rescued you: 'I will be nigh unto those who call upon me; I will grant the desires of those who fear me: I will hearken to their cry and save them.' Show by your conduct that you are not unworthy of His goodness, and you will find that He will for ever support, encourage and sustain you, in the path upon which you have entered. In Madam George, you will have daily before you a safe counsellor, and a worthy example for your imitation. The Lord will finish the work which He has commenced."

"And I, father, will pray to Him to reward those who had compassion upon me, and rescued me from my misery," said Goualeuse; and by a movement almost involuntary, she threw herself upon her knees before the Abbé. Her emotions were overpowering: her sobs were stifling. Madam George, Rodolphe and the Abbé were profoundly moved.

"Rise, my dear child," said the curate; "you will soon merit absolution for the sins, of which you have rather been the victim than the offender; for, in the language of the prophet, 'The Lord supports those who are near falling, and raises up those who are bowed down.'"

"Farewell, Marie," said Rodolphe, giving her a small golden jeannette cross, tied with a black velvet ribbon: "keep this small cross as a memento of me. I have caused to be engraved upon it the date of your redemption. I will soon visit you."

Marie carried the cross to her lips. Murph now opened the door, and said, "The horses are ready, Mr. Rodolphe."

"Farewell, father: farewell, Madam George: adieu, Marie. I again commend her to your care."

The venerable priest, leaning on the arm of Madam George and Goualeuse, who supported his trembling steps, left the parlor, to witness Rodolphe's departure. The last rays of the sun fell with a golden light upon the interesting group:

An aged priest, the emblem of charity, of forgiveness, and eternal hope!

A woman, overwhelmed with all the grief that can afflict a wife and a mother!

A young girl, hardly emerged from childhood, and but just rescued from the abyss of vice and the taint of crime!

Rodolphe ascended the carriage, Murph seated himself by his side, and the horses started off at a gallop.

CHAPTER XV..... THE RENDEZVOUS.

The next day after that on which he had intrusted Marie to the charge of Madam George, Rodolphe, still dressed as a mechanic, was seen, precisely at noon, at the door of a small cabaret, called Panser Fleuri, situated near the barrière de Bercy. The preceding evening, at ten o'clock, Chourineur had punctually fulfilled his appointment with Rodolphe; and the result of the interview will be made known during the present recital.

It was then twelve. The rain was again falling in torrents. The Seine, swelled by a flood, had reached an almost unprecedented height, and was overflowing a part of the quay. Rodolphe looked impatiently, from time to time, in the direction of the barrière. At last he perceived, far off, a man and a woman, sheltered by an umbrella; who, as they approached him, he recognized as Chouette and the Schoolmaster. These two individuals were completely metamorphosed in their appearance. The bandit had dropped his miserable garments, and his air of ferocious brutality, and had decked himself in a long frock-coat of green velvetine, and a round hat, while his cravat and shirt were of spotless whiteness. Had it not been for the frightful hideousness of his face, and the savage glare of his fiery and wandering gaze, the villain, from his calm and composed exterior, might have been mistaken for an honest citizen. Chouette was also arrayed in her holyday dress: she wore a white cap, a long shawl of raw silk, in imitation of Cashmere, and carried in her hand a large-sized basket. The rain having ceased for a few moments, Rodolphe swallowed his disgust, and walked directly to meet the frightful couple. For the slang of the *tapis-franc*, the Schoolmaster had substituted a language refined and elegant, that sounded even more horrible than his former mode of speech; indicating, as it did, a cultivated mind, and contrasting with his sanguinary boasting. When Rodolphe approached, the Schoolmaster bowed deferentially, and Chouette dropped a courtesy.

"Your very humble servant, sir: my respects to you," said the Schoolmaster. "I am happy to make your acquaintance, or rather to renew it; for day before yesterday, you gave me two blows which would have knocked down a rhinoceros. But let us speak no more of it, as I am convinced that it was merely a joke on your part; more important matters have now brought us together. Last night, at eleven, I saw Chourineur at the *tapis-franc*. I urged him to meet us here this morning, if he would be our conductor; but it seems that he positively declines."

"You accept then?"

"Your name, sir, if you please?"

"Rodolphe."

"Suppose, Mr. Rodolphe, we enter the Panser Fleuri; neither myself nor madam have breakfasted; and we will talk about our little affair while breaking a crust of bread."

"I am willing."

"And while approaching it, we can talk of the compensation due from yourself and Chourineur, to me and my wife. You have prevented us from realizing two thousand francs. Chouette was to meet, near Saint Ouen, the tall gentleman in mourning, who inquired for you at the *tapis-franc*, the other night; who was to give us two thousand francs for doing something to you. But while I think of it, Finette," and he addressed the night-owl, "go and select a room at the Panser Fleuri, and order breakfast: mutton-chops, veal-steak and sallad, and two bottles of *Beaune*—first quality wine: we will soon join you."

Chouette had not for an instant taken her eyes from Rodolphe; and she started on her mission, after exchanging glances with the Schoolmaster, who thus continued the conversation:

"I was saying to you, Mr. Rodolphe, that Chourineur had *edified* me on this proposition of two thousand francs."

"Edified! what do you mean by that?"

"Perhaps the term is somewhat too elevated. I mean that Chourineur has partly informed me what the gentleman in black wishes done, for his two thousand francs."

"Well, well!"

"But it is not so well, young gentleman; for Chourineur, having met with Chouette yesterday morning, adhered to her so closely, that when the gentleman in black arrived, he did not dare approach her. You must therefore make us up two thousand francs; to say nothing of the five hundred francs, which we were to have, for returning the pocket-book, but which we should *not* have returned at any rate; for having made an examination of the papers, we have found them to be of much greater value."

"Indeed!" said Rodolphe.

"The papers appear to me to be very curious; they are mostly in the English tongue, and I keep them here," said the bandit, striking the side-pocket of his coat.

Rodolphe was highly pleased that the Schoolmaster still held possession of the papers, of so much importance to himself, which had been stolen from Tom two nights previous; and his particular directions to Chourineur, to prevent the interview with Chouette, had no other object than to keep the papers in the hands of the brigand.

"I keep these papers," said the Schoolmaster, "against a rainy day. I have found out the residence of the gentleman, and shall have an opportunity of seeing him again."

"If our job succeeds, we can make a bargain. I will purchase the papers of you, for I know the man, and can manage him better than you can."

"We will see. But in the first place, let us speak of our business."

"Well, then, I proposed a superb affair to Chourineur, which he at first accepted, but afterward backed out."

"He always had singular ideas," said the brigand.

"But while backing out, he observed to me—rather, he made this observation——"

"The devil! you are very precise with your Syntax."

"Schoolmaster is my profession. Well, then, he made this observation to me: 'That if he *ate no red-bread* himself, (did not rob) he would not disgust others; and that he could give me some assistance."

"Now, can you tell me," said the Schoolmaster, "without being guilty of indiscretion, why you appointed an interview yesterday morning with Chourineur, at Saint Ouens, which gave him the opportunity of meeting with Chouette?"

Rodolphe, somewhat puzzled for an answer, imperceptibly bit his lip, and shrugged his shoulders as he replied:

"I had only told him half of my project, fearing that he might not be entirely decided, and back out."

"That was prudent."

"The more so, because I had two strings to my bow."

"Ah, indeed! a cautious man; you had then made this appointment at Saint Ouens."

Rodolphe had the good fortune, after a moment's hesitation, to invent a probable story, in order to cover Chourineur's blunders; and he said:

"The affair which I proposed, is a very good one, because the owner of the house in question, has gone to the country; and my only fear was, that possibly, he might have returned. I had but one thing to do."

"It was, to assure yourself of the actual presence of the owner in the country."

"Exactly so. I started, therefore, for Pierrefitte, where his country-house is situated—my cousin is a chambermaid there—you understand——"

"Perfectly, my good fellow. Well?"

"My cousin told me, that her master would return to Paris as early as the day after to-morrow."

"The day after to-morrow!"

"Yes."

"I must return to my original question. Why did you appoint a meeting with Chourineur at Saint Ouens?"

"You are not very bright. How far is it from Pierrefitte to Saint Ouens?"

"About a league."

"And from Saint Ouens to Paris?"

"The same distance."

"Well then; if I had found nobody at Pierrefitte, and the house deserted, there was an excellent job there; not so good as this one in Paris, but passable. I was then to return to Saint Ouens for Chourineur, and we were to proceed to Pierrefitte by a back road, I am acquainted with; and——"

"I understand; if, on the contrary, the job in Paris was ready for your hands——"

"We were to reach the barrière Saint Eloile by the road of Revolte, and from there to the alley of Veuves."

"It is but a step, and your plan was a good one. While at Saint Ouens, you were *astride* the two operations. It was very smart, and I now comprehend Chourineur's presence at Saint Ouens. You say, then, that the house in the alley of Veuves, will be uninhabited until after to-morrow?"

"There will be no one there but the porter."

"Of course; and you think it an advantageous operation?"

"My cousin told me, there were sixty thousand francs, in gold, in her master's closet."

"And do you know the inmates?"

"Like my own pocket. My cousin has been there a year; and hearing her so frequently speak of the sums of money which her master draws from the Bank, suggested this job to me. As the porter is a strong fellow, I spoke about it to Chourineur; and, after much hesitation, he consented; but he afterward backed out. I do not think, however, that he would betray a friend."

"No, there is some good in him. But we have arrived, and I do not know whether you feel like me, but the morning air has given me an appetite."

Chouette was on the threshold of the tavern. "This way," said she, "this way. I have ordered breakfast."

Rodolphe had his reasons for wishing the brigand to enter first; but the Schoolmaster deferred, with so much civility, that Rodolphe was obliged to take the precedence. Before seating himself, the Schoolmaster knocked upon the wall to assure himself of its thickness. "We shall not have to speak in a very low tone," said he; "the partition is quite thick; the breakfast will be served in one course, and we shall not be disturbed by the servants."

Before the door was closed, Rodolphe observed the coalman quietly seated in the next room. The room where the scene took place which we are about to describe, was long and narrow, and lighted by a window that opened into the street, opposite the door. Chouette sat with her back to the window. Rodolphe was seated on one side of the table, the Schoolmaster on the other, and they were thus face to face. After the servant had left the room, the Schoolmaster took up his plate, and exchanged his seat for the vacant one nearer to Rodolphe, in order to cut off any retreat to the door. "We shall be more at our ease in this position," said he; "we shall not have to talk so loud."

"You place yourself there to prevent me from going out, do you?" said Rodolphe, in a fearless tone.

The Schoolmaster made a sign of affirmation; and drawing from his coat a long, round dirk, with a wooden handle, hid by his hairy fingers, "Do you see this?" said he.

"Yes."

"'Tis advice to amateurs," said the brigand, frowning in a manner that wrinkled his flattened forehead, and with a significant gesture.

"And believe me, I have sharpened the dirk," added Chouette.

Rodolphe, wonderfully at his ease, put his hand under his blouse, and drew therefrom a small revolving pistol; showed it to the Schoolmaster, and returned it to its place.

"We are ready to proceed," said the Schoolmaster. "I am supposing an impossibility; but *should* you have devised this interview as a trap for me, I will cool you down, very suddenly;" and he threw a ferocious glance on Rodolphe.

"While I would spring on him, and help you, Fourline," added the hag.

Rodolphe made no answer, but poured out a glass of wine, and drank it with great composure. His sang froid had great effect upon the Schoolmaster. "I was only giving you timely notice," said he.

"Well, well, put up your larding-pin into your pocket," said Rodolphe; "there are no chickens here to be larded. I am an old cock, and my *spurs* are as large as any others: let us proceed to business."

"To business it is, then; but say nothing against my larding-pin. It makes no noise; it troubles no one."

"And it makes clean work, does it not, Fourline!" said Chouette.

"By the way, do you know Goualeuse's parents!" said Rodolphe to the hag.

"My man has put into the pocket-book of the tall gentleman two letters upon that subject, but the little thief shall not see them. I had much rather pull out her eyes with my own hands. If I catch her again at the *tapis-franc*, she will rue the day."

"We chat and chat," said the Schoolmaster, "but do not advance with our business."

"Can we talk before *her*?" asked Rodolphe.

"With perfect confidence. She has been well tested, and she can be of great service to us. She can shy about, pick up information, receive goods, sell them, &c. She is an excellent housewife. You cannot imagine how useful she has been to me. Good Finette," said the brigand, stretching forth his hand lovingly to the disgusting piece of mortality; "take off your shawl, Finette, or you may take cold when you go out. Put it on the chair with your basket."

Chouette took off her shawl. In spite of his presence of mind, and habits of self-command, Rodolphe could scarcely repress a movement of great surprise, in seeing suspended on a large gilded chain, from the neck of the old woman, the small *Saint Esprit* of *lapis lazuli*, in every respect identical with the one worn by the son of Madam George, when he disappeared. At this discovery, a sudden thought flashed through the mind of Rodolphe. He had learned from Chourineur, that the Schoolmaster had escaped six months ago from the galleys, and had thwarted the vigilance of the police by his singular disfigurement. It was also six months ago, that Madam George's husband had disappeared from the bagnio! This striking coincidence suggested the probability, to Rodolphe's mind, that the Schoolmaster himself was the husband of that unfortunate lady. This recollection called up another. He remembered, that one day, while Madam George was narrating to him the arrest of her husband, she spoke of the desperate resistance which the monster had made; and that his escape was almost secured by means of his Herculean strength. If this brigand was the husband of Madam George, the fate of her son must be known to him! He had also, in the pocket-book stolen from the stranger, the papers respecting the birth and parentage of Gonalcuse. Rodolphe was, therefore, urged by the strongest motives, to persevere in the project which he had devised. Fortunately, his surprise and preoccupation of mind, was unnoticed by the brigand, who was engaged in talking with Chouette.

"Upon my word," said Rodolphe, to the one-eyed woman, "you have a fine chain there."

"Fine and cheap," said the hag, laughing. "It is a substitute for gold, until my man gives me one of the real metal."

"That will depend on this gentleman, Chouette. If we make a good job of it, you shall have one."

"'Tis a very fine imitation," said Rodolphe. "And pray, what is that little blue thing dangling from it there!"

"It is a present from Fourline. By the by, you must give me a watch; won't you, dear?" said she, addressing her lord.

Rodolphe saw all his suspicions confirmed, and he waited with anxiety for the answer of the Schoolmaster.

"Yes, Finette: but you must keep this also; it is a talisman."

"A talisman!" said Rodolphe, carelessly. "Do you believe in talismans; *you!* And where the devil did you find this one! Pray give me the address of the maker."

"They make no more of them; the shop is closed. This jewel, such as it is, goes back to a high antiquity: three generations have used it, and I set great value upon it as a family relic," said he, with a hideous smile. "It is to give her good luck in our little joint enterprises, that I gave it to Chouette. She assists me with great skill, I assure you; as you will see in this commercial operation which we propose to undertake together. But to return to our business. You said that in the alley Veuves there is——"

"A house, No. 17, where a rich fellow lives. His name is Mr.——"

"I won't be so curious as to require his name. There are, you say, sixty thousand francs in gold, in his closet!"

"Sixty thousand francs in gold!" exclaimed Chouette.

Rodolphe assented with his head.

"And you are acquainted with the appurtenances of the house!" continued the Schoolmaster.

"Perfectly."

"Is the entrance difficult?"

"The wall is but seven feet high on the side of the alley: you then enter the garden: the windows reach to the ground, and the house is but one story high."

"And only one porter to guard such a treasure!"

"Yes."

"And what is your plan for the campaign, young man?" asked the Schoolmaster carelessly.

"It is quite simple: leap over the wall, and force the door or the window-shutters."

"But if the porter wakes?" said the Schoolmaster, looking steadily at Rodolphe.

"That will be his own fault," replied Rodolphe, with a significant gesture. "What do you think of my plan?"

"You can't expect that I can answer you until I have examined the premises myself, or by the agency of my wife; but if all you have stated is true, I think that the iron must be beaten while it is hot; that is to say, *to-night*;" and the brigand again looked fixedly at Rodolphe.

"To-night! impossible," said the other in a composed tone.

"Why not?" said the Schoolmaster, "since the owner will return the day after to-morrow."

"That is true; but I cannot coöperate with you to-night."

"Well! *I* cannot to-morrow."

"What is the reason?"

"The same reason that prevents you from acting to-night," said the brigand with a sneer.

"Well, as you please: let it be to-night," said Rodolphe, after a moment's reflection; "but where shall we meet again?"

"Meet again!" said the Schoolmaster; "we do not part."

"How so!"

"What's the use of parting? If the weather clears, we will take a walk as far as the alley Veuves, and you will be able to see how well my wife can work. After that we will eat a morsel, and play a game of piquet in a cellar that I am acquainted with, on the Champs Elysees near the river; and if the alley Veuves is deserted early, we will take up the line of march about ten o'clock."

"I will join you at nine o'clock."

"Do you wish to do the job with me?"

"Certainly I do," said Rodolphe.

"Well, then, you must not part from my company till to-night; or else——"

"What?"

"I shall think you intend to set a trap for me; and that, I presume, is the reason you wish to go."

"If I had desired to set a trap for you, what could have prevented my doing it for to-night?"

"Everything! you did not expect that I would propose the job so soon: if we do not part, you can tell no one."

"Do you mistrust me!"

"Infinitely; but as there may be some truth in what you have said, and the half of sixty thousand francs is worth the trouble, I am willing to undertake it; but to-night or never. If you say never, my suspicions of you will be confirmed, and I will one day serve you with a dish of my own cooking."

"And I will return you the civility, depend upon it."

"All this is nonsense," said Chouette: "I think with Fourline; to-night or never."

Rodolphe found himself in a state of great perplexity and embarrassment: if he should permit this opportunity of capturing the Schoolmaster to escape, it might never return again; the wretch would be henceforth upon his guard; or perhaps, recognized and arrested, would be sent back to the bagnio, and carry with him the secrets Rodolphe was so much interested in knowing. Confiding to chance, and his own skill and cunning, he said to the Schoolmaster, "I consent; we will not part until to-night."

"In that case, I am your man; and you shall have no reason to repent it: but as it is now near two o'clock, and the rain still pours, and the alley of Veuves is some distance off, suppose we pay our bill and take a hack."

"But shall I not have time to smoke a cigar first?"

"Certainly," said the Schoolmaster; "Finette is not annoyed by smoke."

"Well; I will go and get some cigars," said Rodolphe, rising.

"Do not take that trouble," said the Schoolmaster, stopping him; "Finette will go."

Rodolphe sat down, convinced that the Schoolmaster had penetrated his design. Chouette left the room.

"What a good housekeeper I have there," said the brigand: "she is so obliging: she would throw herself into the fire to be of service to me."

"Speaking of fire, is it not very warm here?" said Rodolphe, thrusting both hands into the pockets of his blouse: and while continuing the conversation with the Schoolmaster, took a pencil from his pocket without being perceived by him, and wrote hastily a few words; taking care to make the letters large and far apart, as he was obliged to write with his hands under his

blouse. The writing of the note having escaped the Schoolmaster's observation, the next question was, how to transmit it. Rodolphe arose, and carelessly approaching the window, hummed an air between his teeth, and beat an accompaniment on the window-panes. The Schoolmaster also came to the window, and asked Rodolphe, with an air of indifference, "What tune is that you are playing?"

"I am playing, '*Tu n'auras pas ma rose.*'"

"'T is a very pretty air: I was only anxious to know whether it would have effect enough on the passers-by to make them turn their heads."

"I have no such design."

"You must me mistaken, for you are drumming very hard."

CHAPTER XVI..... THE PREPARATIONS.

Chouette reëntered, bringing with her the cigars.

"It seems to me that it rains no longer," said Rodolphe, lighting a cigar; "if we should go after the hack ourselves, the exercise would do us good."

"Rains no more!" said the Schoolmaster; "you must be blind. Do you think that I am going to expose Finette in such weather as this, and risk her precious life, and spoil her new shawl?"

"You are right, Fourline; it is miserable weather."

"Very well!" said Rodolphe, "the maid will come, and when we have paid our bill, we will send her after a conveyance."

"That is the most judicious thing you have said, young man."

The servant came in, and Rodolphe gave her five francs.

"Oh, sir! you are too civil," said the Schoolmaster; "I cannot permit you to pay."

"Each one in his turn," said Rodolphe.

"I submit, only on condition that you will permit me to offer you some refreshment, in a small cabaret in the Champs Elysees—an excellent place."

The bill being paid, they all arose. Rodolphe wished to pass out last, in politeness to Chouette. The Schoolmaster would not permit it, but followed him very closely, surveying every motion. There was a bar below stairs, and among the drinkers around it, a coalman with a smirched face, and a broad-brimmed hat pulled over his eyes, who was paying his bill as our trio descended. In spite of the vigilance of the Schoolmaster and Chouette, Rodolphe contrived to exchange a rapid and meaning glance with Murph. The door of the hack was open, and Rodolphe stopped, determined to enter it the last, for the coalman was approaching him. Chouette had seated herself, and, after much ceremony, Rodolphe was compelled to follow; for the Schoolmaster whispered to him, "You certainly seem desirous of exciting my suspicions."

When Rodolphe was seated, the coalman approached, and searched with anxiety the countenance of his friend.

"Where shall I drive to, master?" asked the coachman.

Rodolphe replied in a loud voice, "To the alley of ——"

"Accacias, Bois de Boulogne," said the Schoolmaster, interrupting. "Drive on; you shall be well paid."

The door was closed. "How the devil can you say where we are going to, before these fools?" said the Schoolmaster; "should it be discovered, to-morrow their testimony would hang us. You are a very imprudent young man."

"True enough," said Rodolphe, as the hack started; "I did not think of it. But my cigar will make smoked herrings of you: let me open the window;" and accompanying the words with the act, he adroitly dropped from the window a small piece of paper, folded up in the minutest compass possible, on which he had written the few words underneath his blouse. The Schoolmaster was so observant, that in spite of the impassibility of Rodolphe's countenance, he detected in it an air of triumph; for putting his head out of the window, he sang out to the driver, "Cut behind! cut behind! there is some one on the back of the carriage." Rodolphe, trembling, was compelled to join in the request. The horses were stopped, and the driver, standing upon his seat and looking behind, said, "Nobody is there, master."

"I want to be assured of that myself," said the Schoolmaster, leaping from the hack. He found no one, he discovered nothing, although the horses had gone but a few steps after Rodolphe had dropped the paper. The Schoolmaster was convinced that he was under a mistake, and said, while returning to the carriage, "You may laugh at me, but I was confident that some one was following us."

The hack now turned into a by-street. After the disappearance of the carriage, Murph, who had kept his eye upon it, and who had perceived the manœuvre of Rodolphe, ran to pick up the small note, which had fallen into a hole between the paving-stones.

In about a quarter of an hour, the Schoolmaster said to the driver, "We have changed our minds: drive to the place Magdaline." Rodolphe looked at him in surprise.

"From that place, young man," said the Schoolmaster, "we can go to a thousand others; and if we should be arrested, the driver's testimony will not be worth anything."

As the carriage approached the barrière, a tall man, dressed in a long white surtout, and with his hat pulled over his brows, passed rapidly on a magnificent horse. "A fine horse," said Rodolphe, leaning from the window and following Murph with his eyes. "How fast the large man travels: did you observe him?" Rodolphe could scarcely dissimulate his joy: Murph had deciphered the hieroglyphics of his note. The Schoolmaster, convinced that the carriage was not pursued, wished to imitate Chouette, who was dozing or pretending to doze; and he said to Rodolphe, "Excuse me, young man, but the motion of the carriage has the effect of a cradle upon me: it lulls me to sleep." Under the pretence of sleep, the brigand was anxious to give Rodolphe an opportunity of betraying himself. The latter was well aware of the stratagem, and said: "I was up very early myself, and if you have no objections, I will follow your example." Deceived by the hard breathing of Chouette and the Schoolmaster, who snored in unison, Rodolphe unclosed his lids, and found both of his companions with their eyes wide open, exchanging some mysterious communication, by means of their fingers strangely placed on the palms of their hands. Upon a sudden, the symbolic language ceased, the bandit perceiving, by the least perceptible sign, that Rodolphe was not sleeping. "Ah! comrade," said he, "you seem to be testing your friends."

"That can hardly astonish you, since you snore with your eyes wide open."

"Oh, it is a different thing with me; I am a somnambulist."

The hack now drew up at the place Magdaline. The rain had ceased for a moment; but the clouds, driven by the violence of the wind, hung so black and low, that it was already dark. Rodolphe, Chouette, and the Schoolmaster, were now directing their steps toward *Cours la Reine*.

"Young man," said the Schoolmaster, "I have a thought, which is not a bad one."

"What is it?"

"To assure myself, whether all you have said about the house in the alley of Veuves is true."

"If you went to ramble about the place now, 't would excite suspicions; for it is hardly four."

"I am not such a fool; but I have a wife, whose name is Finette."* Chouette raised her head. "Do you observe her, young man, like a war-horse that hears the charge?"

"Do you wish to send her to make an examination?"

"Certainly."

"No. 17, alley of Veuves, is it not?" exclaimed Chouette, with an air of impatience. "I have but one eye, but it is a good one."

"Do you see her? do you see her, young man! She already burns to be there."

"If she can manage it skilfully, I think your idea a good one."

"Hold the umbrella, Fourline. In half an hour I shall be back, and you will learn what I can do."

"Hold a moment, Chouette: we will go to the *Cœur-Saignant*,† and if little *Tortillard*‡ is there, you can take him with you; he will keep on the look-out, while you go in and examine."

"You are right. Tortillard is not ten years old, but he is as sly as a fox. The other day——"

A gesture from the Schoolmaster interrupted Chouette.

"This Cœur-Saignant has a singular name for a tavern," said Rodolphe.

"You must complain to the keeper of it."

"What's his name?"

"The landlord's of the Cœur-Saignant?"

"Yes."

"He never asks the names of his customers."

"But still——"

"Call him what you please—Peter, Thomas, Christopher, Barnaby—he will answer you. And here we are, just in time, for the rain is commencing again. How the river is swollen; it looks like a lake; if it continues to rain for two days more, it will flow over the bridge."

"You say that we have arrived; but where the devil is the tavern? I see no house here."

"If you look around you, you cannot see it, of course."

"Where would you have one look?"

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* *Finette*, in French, means cunning.

† *Cœur-Saignant*—the bleeding heart. ‡ *Tortillard*—lame one.

"At your feet, to be sure."

"At my feet!"

"Yes."

Rodolphe had never before observed one of those under-ground grog-shops, which a few years ago were frequently seen in various parts of the Champs Elysees, particularly in the neighborhood of Cours la Reine.

A staircase, dug from the soft and slippery soil, leads, as it were, into a deep and capacious ditch, against one of the steep banks of which leans an old filthy building, sunk in the mud. The roof, which is covered with tiles, was hardly raised above the ground on which Rodolphe was now standing; a few worm-eaten planks leaning against each other, served as out-houses to this lowest of all conceivable abodes. A very narrow lane, led from the foot of the staircase to the door of this subterranean den, and the small remnant of earth which remained, was covered by a vine-railing, intended to shelter two rows of coarse tables stuck in the soil. The old sign, beat against by the wind, squeaked on its iron hinges; and on its defaced surface, you could with difficulty discern a bleeding heart pierced by an arrow, as it swung to and fro over the door of this human burrow. A murky fog, uniting with the rain as night approached, increased the discomforts and solidity of the atmosphere.

"What do you think of this hotel, young man?" said the Schoolmaster.

"Thanks to the rain which has been falling for a fortnight, it must have become a fine pond by this time, and I doubt not but we shall have excellent fishing. Come, proceed to dive," said Rodolphe.

"Hold a moment: I must first see if our host is in attendance;" and the bandit pressed his tongue against his palate and produced a strange sort of gutteral sound. It was answered by a similar sound from the depths of the earth. "He is in," said the Schoolmaster. "Pardon me young man, have a respect for the ladies; allow Chouette to pass, take care you do not fall, it is rather moist."

CHAPTER XVII. ..... THE CŒUR-SAIGNANT.

The host of the Cœur-Saignant, after having answered the signal of the Schoolmaster, approached to the brink of his burrow to receive him. He was the identical Red-arm whom Rodolphe had visited the Cité to find, but whom he was not now destined to know under his true appellation, or rather his habitual surname. Bras-rouge was a thin, feeble, diminutive man, of fifty years of age. The prominent features of his face combined those of the wildcat and the weasel; peaked nose, flat forehead, receding chin, high cheek-bones, small, quick and peculiar eyes, with an indescribable expression of cunning, shrewdness and sagacity. A small wig, of the same bilious tinge with his complexion, perched as it were on the top of his skull, and left denuded the back part of his head, upon which a few straggling gray hairs could be discerned. He wore a roundabout jacket, and one of those long dark aprons which are usually seen on wine-merchants' boys. Our acquaintances were hardly at the foot of the staircase, before a child about ten years of age, very small, with a sly and sickly look, lame and deformed, came to join Bras-rouge; whom he resembled so strikingly, that there was no mistaking his legitimacy. He had the same piercing and artful gaze with the father, but the child's head was covered with a growth of yellowish, hard, and bristly hair. Maroon-colored pantaloons, and a gray blouse, fastened round him with a leather belt, completed the costume of Tortillard, who was indebted to his deformity for his surname: he stood by the side of his father upon his straight leg, with his crooked one raised, like a crane upon the brink of a swamp. "Here is the dear little monkey," said the Schoolmaster to the hag: "come, Finette; time is precious, night is at hand, and we must improve what remains of day."

"You are right, my man, and I am going to ask his father to let the boy go with me."

"Good-day, old fellow," said Bras-rouge to the Schoolmaster; "what can I do to serve you?"

"I want you to lend this little chap to my wife for half an hour—she has lost something near here, and he will help her find it."

Bras-rouge winked with expressive pantomime to the Schoolmaster, and said to his son, "Tortillard, follow madam."

The deformed child seemed attracted by the ugliness of Chouette, in the same manner that other children are by a benevolent expression of countenance; and limping as he went, ran to take the one-eyed woman's hand.

"You love of a monikin!" exclaimed she; "this is the child for me; how he *takes* to me; not like Pegriotte, who seemed sick at the stomach every time I came near her."

"Do your business quickly, Finette," said the Schoolmaster; "keep your eye open, I will wait for you here."

"I shall not be long, I assure you. Go ahead Tortillard;" and Chouette and the lame boy ascended the slippery stairway."

"Take your umbrella, Finette," exclaimed the brigand.

"It would be in my way, good man," said the hag; who soon disappeared with Tortillard in the thick mist which the night fall had collected, and with the wind murmuring through the dark and leafless branches of the tall elms on the Champs Elysees.

"Come, let us go in," said Rodolphe.

He was compelled to stoop in order to enter the low door of the Cœur-Saignant, which he found divided into two rooms. In one of them, was a bar and a miserable billiard-table, and in the other, tables for refreshment, and garden chairs, which once had been painted green. Two windows, with diamond-shaped glass, covered with cobwebs, hardly admitted a ray of light into the pestilential apartment, whose walls were damp with green exhalations. Rodolphe remained alone for a moment, which Bras-rouge and the Schoolmaster improved, to exchange rapidly a few words, and some signs of mystic import.

"Won't you drink a glass of beer or of brandy, while waiting for Finette?" said the Schoolmaster.

"No: I am not thirsty."

"Every one to his taste; as for myself, I shall take a glass of brandy;" and he seated himself by one of the small green tables in the back room.

The darkness was so impenetrable in this burrow, that it was impossible to discover that, in one of the angles of this second apartment, there was a trap, opening with folding doors, by means of which there was an access to the cellar; one of the doors being left constantly open for purposes of convenience. The table at which the Schoolmaster had seated himself, was on the brink of this hole, and he had turned his back to it in order more completely to hide it from Rodolphe. The latter was now gazing through one of the windows, to maintain, if possible, the composure of his countenance, and to disguise the agitation of his mind. The sight of Murph galloping to the alley of Veuves, had not much relieved his anxiety—he was still fearful whether the worthy Squire would understand the note, which was necessarily so laconic; but most of all, he feared to lose the only opportunity he might ever have of gaining possession of secrets in which his heart was so deeply interested. Although vigorous, fearless, and well armed, he was forced to resort to every stratagem with this desperate murderer, who hesitated at no crime. Shall we say that such was the strange idiosyncracy of Rodolphe, that he found a sort of awful charm in nervous and violent emotions; and in the perplexity and obstacles which impeded the execution of the project which he had formed the day before, with Murph and Chourineur.

Not wishing, however, to betray his thoughts, he seated himself by the Schoolmaster and asked for something to drink, in order to assist his composure. Bras-rouge, after the few words exchanged with the Schoolmaster, regarded Rodolphe with mistrustful and sardonic glances.

"It is my opinion, young man, that if my wife informs us that the people we wish to see are at home, we can pay them a visit by eight o'clock."

"It is too early by a couple of hours," said Rodolphe.

"Do you believe so!"

"I am sure of it."

"Bah! people are not particular among friends."

"I know them well," said Rodolphe; "and I repeat, that we must not go before ten o'clock."

"You are an obstinate young man!"

"It is my way of thinking, and the devil take me if I start from this place before ten."

"Make yourself at home," said Bras-rouge, in his shrill voice. "I never close my establishment before midnight; that is the time when my best customers arrive, and the neighbors do not complain of the noise."

"I agree to all you propose, young man. Let it be settled that we start for our visit at ten o'clock."

"Here is Chouette!" said Bras-rogue, hearing and answering a signal, similar to that which the Schoolmaster had made before descending into this subterranean abode.

Chouette now entered the billiard-room. "It is all right, all right," exclaimed she, entering the apartment where Rodolphe and the Schoolmaster were seated.

Bras-rogue discreetly retired, without inquiring about Tortillard, whom probably he did not expect to see for some time.

With her clothes drenched with rain, the old woman took a seat opposite to Rodolphe and the bandit.

"Well, now?" said the Schoolmaster.

"The young man has told the truth, thus far," said she.

"Did you examine the place?" asked Rodolphe.

"Let Chouette tell her own story, young man," said the Schoolmaster. "Go on, Chouette."

"I reached No. 17, while it was yet daylight, after having left Tortillard hid in a hole to keep watch. I rapped at a small door with hinges on the outside, and two inches space underneath it; no obstacle at all. The porter, a large man of fifty, with a sleepy, good-natured look, small reddish whiskers, and a bald head, opened the door. Before ringing the bell, I had put my cap into my pocket, in order to appear like one of the neighbors. As soon as I saw the door-keeper, I pretended to cry, saying, 'I have lost my parroquet, Cocotte, a dear little bird, which I almost worship.' I said that I lived in Marbeuf avenue, and had, from garden to garden, pursued my Cocotte; and I begged the porter to permit me to look for it in his garden."

"Ahem!" said the Schoolmaster, looking at the hag with an air of proud satisfaction; "what a woman!"

"It was very smart," added Rodolphe; "but what next?"

"The porter allowed me to look for my bird; and you might see me going all round the garden, looking up and down, and about, in every direction, to examine everything, and calling all the time, 'Cocotte! Cocotte!' Inside of the wall," continued the old woman, describing the premises, "is a grape-vine lattice, a perfect staircase, and in the corner, a fir-tree, which is so complete a ladder that a woman could descend it. The house is one story high, and has six windows on the floor, and four basement windows. The windows on the floor are closed with shutters, having a latch below and a hook above: force the latch, pull the hook, and the job is done."

"A mere trifle!" said the Schoolmaster.

"The entrance-door has a window in it, protected by blinds."

"What a memory!" said the Schoolmaster.

"I see the house before me, as if I were there myself," said Rodolphe.

"Near the yard, on the left," continued Chouette, "there is a well-house, the roof of which might be used in case retreat was cut off on the side near the door; for at that place there are no railings against the wall."

"Did you enter the house?"

"She entered it, young man," said the Schoolmaster, with pride.

"Certainly, I went in. When I could not find Cocotte, I cried the more; I pretended to faint, and asked the porter if I might not sit down on the threshold? The good man invited me in, and offered me a glass of wine and water. 'Only a glass of water; only a glass of water,' said I; and the porter went into an ante-chamber. There are carpets on all the floors—a good precaution, for steps will not be heard, nor broken glass, if a window-pane should happen to be broken—and folding-doors, with duck-bill locks, which open by blowing at them. At the bottom of the room, there is a strong chest which smells like gold. I had my wax in my basket——"

"She had her wax, young man; she never steps out of doors without her wax."

"It was necessary to approach the chest which smelt like money; so I feigned myself sick, and weak, and leaned against the wall. Hearing me cough, the porter said, 'I must put some sugar into your water;' and he probably went after a spoon, for I heard the ringing. Remember that, Fourline, silver plate in the room at the right. Coughing and groaning, I approached the door; I had the wax in the palm of my hand; I leaned against the lock, and here is the impression; if it will not serve to-day, it will be of use some other time;" and Chouette gave the brigand a piece of yellow wax, on which the print of the lock was clearly delineated. "Now you must tell me if that is the money-chest?" said Chouette.

"Just so; the money is there," answered Rodolphe.

"But all the money is not there!" exclaimed Chouette, whose solitary eye shone with an unusual glare; "for, pretending to look for Cocotte, and approaching the window, I saw in one of the rooms at the left of the door, large bags of money on a bureau. I saw them as plainly as I see you, Fourline. There were at least a dozen of them."

"Where is Tortillard?" said the bandit, roughly.

"He is still in his hole, watching the only entrance to No. 17, like a cat in the dark; if any one goes into the house he will inform us."

"That is good!" and hardly had the bandit pronounced these words, when suddenly rushing with all his strength upon Rodolphe, grasped him by the throat, and dashed him through the trap into the cellar beneath! The attack was so sudden, so unforeseen, and so violent, as to set at defiance all Rodolphe's powers of resistance. Chouette uttered a piercing shriek. She was not prepared for the frightful crime, which had been so instantaneously committed. When the groans of Rodolphe had died away, the Schoolmaster, who was perfectly familiar with all the localities of the horrible grave into which he had prostrated him, descended slowly into it, listening attentively.

"Fourline! Fourline! Have a care for yourself, Fourline! draw your dirk," exclaimed the screech owl, hanging over the pit.

The brigand disappeared without a word. At first, not a sound was heard; but soon she discerned the noise of a door creaking on its rusty hinges and a new silence ensued. Total darkness reigned, until Chouette produced a match from her basket, and lighted a small taper, which scarcely penetrated the grave-like gloom; it threw a feeble gleam on the distorted features of the murderer, which appeared that moment at the mouth of the pit. Chouette, casting a glance into the depth below, could scarcely restrain a shriek at the sight of his face, ghastly and mutilated, with eyes wide apart, which seemed like phosphoric lights creeping on the dense darkness, which the taper now began to dispel.

"Fourline," exclaimed the hag, "you are a fearful man! you frightened even me."

"Haste! haste! to the alley of Veuves; an hour hence will be too late," cried the monster, securing the trap-door with an iron bar.

CHAPTER XVIII..... THE CAVE.

At the foot of the steps which descended into the vault, Rodolphe remained, faint and insensible, from the effect of his terrible fall, when the Schoolmaster dragged him to the entrance of another cave, still deeper than the first, and plunging him down, secured the door by means of iron stanchions. The brigand was now hastening to the alley of Veuves, to add another robbery, perhaps another murder, to the crimes with which he was already stained. After the lapse of an hour, Rodolphe gradually recovered his animation. He was lying on the ground, in the midst of the densest darkness. As he threw his arms about him, they struck upon some stone-steps; and he soon discovered that his feet were covered with water. After a violent effort, he succeeded in seating himself upon the lowest step of the range, which ascended to the mouth of the cave.

His insensibility was now gradually dissipating itself. He discovered, by the ease of his motions, that none of his limbs were fractured; he listened attentively, but heard nothing—nothing but the slight, though incessant noise of flowing water. The successive acts of violence to which he had been exposed, were recurring to his memory, when he discovered an unusual coolness about his feet; and, on closer examination, perceived that he was ancle-deep in water. He now comprehended the full horror of his situation! the water was filling the cave! The flood of the Seine was unusually high, and this subterranean vault was below the level of the river! This alarming danger completely restored his shattered senses, and with the rapidity of thought, he ascended the damp staircase. When he arrived at the top, his head struck against the door; but he struggled in vain to open it; fixed and immovable, it remained on its iron hinges. In the midst of his desperate peril, his thoughts reverted to Murph. "He is not on his guard," said he; "the monster will murder him, and on my head his blood will rest." The thought redoubled the strength of Rodolphe: standing on his feet, and bending his shoulders beneath the door, he exhausted his extraordinary powers, in futile efforts against the unyielding entrance to the cave. In the hope of finding some lever below, he descended the steps; on the last step but one, he felt two or three soft and yielding bodies, which glided from under his feet. They were rats, driven from their holes by the water! Rodolphe groped around the bottom of the cave, with the water up to his knees; but he discovered nothing which, in this dread emergency, might serve him as a lever. He counted the steps as he ascended; there were thirteen of them; three were already submerged. Thirteen! a fatal number, thought he. In certain situations, the firmest minds are not insensible to superstitious feeling; and that number, now seemed to Rodolphe ominous of evil. The peril in which he had involved Murph, again recurred to his mind; and he searched for some opening, between the earth and the door, but in vain. It was hermetically sealed, by the moisture which had swelled the wood. Rodolphe screamed aloud, thinking to reach the ears of the inmates of the tavern, but he heard nothing—nothing but the continued moan of the water, which was rapidly increasing. He sat with his back against the door, overwhelmed with grief,

and wept while thinking of his friend, who even now might be suffering the agonies of death, beneath the knife of the assassin! Bitterly did he repent of his rash and audacious scheme, although formed under the influence of the most elevated motives. He recalled to mind, with many tears, the thousand proofs of Murph's devotion; who, rich and honored, had left a wife and a beloved child, to act as his ally, in the singular but noble expiation which he had imposed upon himself. The water steadily increased; only five steps were now uncovered; and Rodolphe, standing with his head against the top of the vault, with serene coolness numbered the minutes his agony would endure. How slow, silent, and frightful would be his death! He remembered the pistol which he carried, and thought that, by firing it close to the door, he might possibly force it. Alas! this resource was no longer left to him; for he had either lost the weapon in his fall, or it had been stolen from him by the Schoolmaster. Had it not been for his fears, on Murph's account, Rodolphe could have faced this awful death with serenity. He had lived long, he had been ardently loved, he had done much good; he yearned to do more: God knows it all! Instead of murmuring against his fate, he saw in it, a just punishment for a fatal deed which he had not yet expiated. His thoughts became more elevated, more sublime, as his peril increased. A new torture now assailed Rodolphe's fortitude. The rats, pursued by the water, had ascended, step by step, the staircase for refuge, and finally crept over Rodolphe's form; and he felt swarms of them upon him, with inconceivable loathing and disgust. He attempted to force them away; but their sharp teeth drew the blood in streams from his hands, and, as his blouse and vest were torn open by his fall, he now felt their sharp, cold claws, and their slimy hair on his naked breast. He threw them from him; but the vile, loathsome vermin swam back again! Rodolphe renewed his cries, but no answer came: in a few moments, he would no longer be able to shout; for the water had now reached his neck, and would soon cover his mouth! The air was nearly exhausted in the narrow space unoccupied by the water! The first symptoms of asphyxy attacked him: the arteries of his temples throbbed, his head became dizzy, his breath was leaving his body! He gave his last thoughts to Murph, and he raised his soul toward God, not in supplication for relief, but for forgiveness. Rodolphe was now about leaving, not only all that can make ordinary life happy, renowned and enviable; but a Royal title, and almost Sovereign power! He must for ever relinquish an enterprise, which gratified his two most powerful instincts: the *love of good*, and *the abhorrence of crime*; and he hoped at least, that this pious disposition which had led him to this horrible death, might one day be imputed to him in extenuation of his offences. Rodolphe, during this terrible struggle, was not visited by any of those impulses of rage and powerless frenzy, which lead weak souls to curse by turns mankind, their destiny, and their God! No; as long as reason remained, Rodolphe bore his fate with resignation: when agony beclouded his intellect, and he was entirely surrendered to the mere instinct of vitality, he struggled physically, but not morally, against his last enemy. The frenzy that precludes death, now swept his thoughts down its whirling and rapid current. With the consciousness of water bubbling into his ears, the last glimmer of reason was dying away; when the sound of hurried steps, and human voices drew near. Hope revived his expiring strength. By an extreme tension of all his remaining powers, he was enabled to distinguish the words which were spoken.

"You see, then, that there is nobody here?"

"Thunder! it is true," replied, in a most sad tone, Chourineur's voice, and the noise of their retreating steps died away on Rodolphe's ear; and, senseless and powerless, he slid down the staircase.

Upon a sudden, the door of the cave was opened, and the water rushed violently through. Chourineur was able to seize Rodolphe by the arms; the hands of which were fastened on the threshold with the convulsive grasp of a drowning man!

CHAPTER XIX. ..... THE SICK-ROOM.

The scene now changes to the house in the alley of Veuves, whither Rodolphe, rescued from almost certain death, had been conveyed by Chourineur. He was lying on a bed, whose green damask hangings softened the light of the fire blazing on the hearth; and of the lamp, which cast its rays from the table. A negro, dressed with scrupulous neatness, of a medium stature, with short gray hair, and a green and orange ribbon displayed in the button-hole of his coat; was now engaged in timing the pulsations of Rodolphe, by a stop-watch which he held in his hand. The black physician was sad and pensive; and he watched the countenance of Rodolphe with an expression of the tenderest solicitude. Chourineur, still dressed in his mud-covered rags, was seated at the foot of the bed; his features hard and bronzed, his beard wet and disordered, his arm dropped, and his hands clasped; and yet from beneath this uncouth exterior, there shone a rather interesting expression of anxiety and compassion. Hardly daring to breathe, his broad chest was heaving with the constraint. Distressed at the meditative attitude of the physician, and presaging therefrom a fatal result, he ventured to make this philosophical observation, while contemplating Rodolphe:

"Who would think, seeing him now so weak and feeble, that he could give such blows as those finishing-touches were! He will recover his strength in a short time, will he not, Mr. Doctor? Upon my word, I would be willing to have him drum up a convalescence on my back: that would do him good, would it not?"

"The physician, without answering, made a gentle sign with the hand. Chourineur was silent. "The potion!" said the black.

Chourineur, who had left his thick-nailed shoes at the door, instantly went to the commode, walking as lightly as possible, but with the most laughable contortion of legs, and elevation of shoulders, and balancing of arms. The poor fellow seemed attempting to collect all his weight into those parts of his body which did not touch the floor; yet in spite of the thick carpet with which it was covered, it groaned under the heavy form of the uncouth nurse. Unfortunately, in his anxiety to perform his functions correctly, he pressed the neck of the phial so carefully in his brawny hands, as to break it off, and spill the liquid on the carpet. At the sight of his mishap, Chourineur remained motionless, with one of his large legs raised in the air, his toes nervously contracted; looking alternately at the physician, and the neck of the bottle which remained in his hands.

"What an awkward devil!" said the negro, vexed.

"Blockhead that I am!" replied Chourineur.

"Fortunately you took the wrong bottle," said the Esculapius, looking at the commode; "I wished the other."

"The little red one?" asked the unlucky nurse.

"Of course: there is no other."

Chourineur, wheeling about with military precision, crushed the broken remnants of the phial under his bare feet. More delicate extremities would have suffered thereby; but he owed to his occupation of wood-carrier, a pair of natural soles, as hard as a horse's hoof.

"Take care," said the doctor; "you will cut your feet!"

Chourineur took no notice of the advice, so intent was he upon fulfilling his present mission to the satisfaction of the physician, in order that his former awkwardness might be forgotten. It was a curiosity to see with what care and scrupulousness he parted his two bony fingers, and delicately picked up the small phial. If it had been a butterfly, it would not have left an atom of the golden dust of its wings on Chourineur's fingers.

The black physician dreaded a new catastrophe from this excessive precaution; but fortunately, on the second attempt, the phial was safely delivered into his hands.

"Do you wish to wound yourself?" said the doctor.

"How wound myself?"

"Twice you have walked across that broken glass."

"If that is all, give yourself no uneasiness: my soles are well lined with wheelbarrow leather."

"A teaspoon," said the doctor.

Chourineur resumed his elephantine evolutions, and brought forward what was required."

After taking a few drops from the phial, Rodolphe slightly moved, and raised one of his arms.

"Well! well!" said the physician, "he is recovering from his torpor: the bleeding has had a good effect, and he is now out of danger."

"Saved? bravo! *vive la charte!*" shouted Chourineur, in an explosion of joy.

"Keep yourself quiet."

"Yes, sir."

"His pulse has become more regular."

"And the poor friend of Mr. Rodolphe's, doctor—thunder and Mars! when he hears of it! Fortunately that——"

"Silence!"

"Yes, yes; doctor."

"Be seated."

"But, sir——"

"Be seated, I say; you annoy me by walking about in that manner."

"I am as dirty, doctor, as a floated log: I shall soil the furniture."

"Do as you please," said the physician, "but for Heaven's sake, be quiet;" and he placed himself in an easy chair, and leaned his forehead upon his hand.

After a moment's reflection, Chourineur, more out of obedience to the doctor than from any regard to his own ease, with great care and ingenuity, turned down a chair upon the carpet, with the intention of seating himself on one of its rounds, so as not to soil its elegant covering. As he was unfortunately ignorant of the laws of gravity and equilibrium, the chair upset; and by an involuntary movement of one of the poor fellow's arms, the commode was prostrated, smashing a teapot, cup and platter, which was on it. This unexpected tumult started the black physician from his seat.

Rodolphe rose suddenly in bed, looked around to collect his ideas, and exclaimed:

"Murph! Where is Murph?"

"Let your highness be composed," said the doctor, most respectfully; "I have great hopes for him."

"Is he wounded?" asked Rodolphe.

"Alas! he is, my lord."

"Where is he? I must see him."

Rodolphe made an effort to rise, but fell back again, overcome with the severe contusions which he had received.

"Let me be carried to him," said Rodolphe, "for I cannot walk."

"My lord, he is now reposing; and it would be dangerous to excite him by the least emotion."

"Ah! you are deceiving me: he is dead! dead! and I am his murderer!" exclaimed Rodolphe, in a distressed tone of voice, and clasping his hands.

"My lord, I am incapable of deceiving you. I assure you upon my honor that Murph lives; severely wounded, it is true, but with almost the certainty of recovering."

"Oh! you are telling me this to prepare me for some terrible announcement! Murph is doubtless in a desperate condition."

"My lord!"

"I am sure you are deceiving me, and I wish instantly to be carried to him: the sight of my friend will be salutary."

"Once more, my lord, I affirm upon my honor, that unless some unforeseen casualty intervenes, Mr. Murph will soon recover."

"Is that true, very true, my dear David?"

"Most assuredly true, my lord."

"Hear me, David. You know the high consideration in which I have held you since you were attached to my house; the unlimited confidence I have reposed in you, never doubting for a moment your learning and skill: but should a consultation be deemed necessary——"

"It was my first thought, my lord. At the present moment, however, I regard a consultation as useless; besides, I was unwilling to introduce strangers into the house, against the positive orders which you gave yesterday."

"But how has all this happened?" said Rodolphe, interrupting his medical attendant. "Who took me from the cave where I was perishing in the water? I have a confused recollection of hearing Chourineur's voice: was I mistaken?"

"No, no, my lord: the brave fellow can himself inform you; for to him you are indebted for your rescue."

"Where is he? where is he?"

The doctor sought with his eyes for the unfortunate nurse, who, mortified at his fall, had taken refuge behind the curtains of the bed.

"Here he is," said the doctor; "he looks very much ashamed of himself."

"Come, approach, my brave fellow," said Rodolphe, stretching forth his hand to the devoted convict who had rescued him.

CHAPTER XX..... CHOURINEUR'S NARRATIVE.

THE confusion of Chourineur was increased, by hearing the black doctor address Rodolphe several times as "my lord."

"Come near me, Chourineur, and give me your hand," said Rodolphe.

"Pardon me, sir, I mean my lord, but——"

"Call me Rodolphe, as before: I like it much better."

"And I also, it is so much easier; but as for my hand, I beg of you excuse me, it has done so much work this evening;" and he extended with great timidity his soiled fingers to Rodolphe.

Rodolphe pressed them most cordially.

"Come, be seated, I pray you. How did you discover the cave? But now I think of it, where is the Schoolmaster?"

"We have him here securely," said the black doctor.

"Tied up like two bundles of tobacco, both himself and Chouette," continued Chourineur. "What looks they must be casting to each other at this moment! what agreeable companions they must be!"

"And my poor Murph!" exclaimed Rodolphe; "Good Heavens! only think of his sufferings! Pray, where is he wounded?"

"On the right side," said the doctor; "fortunately, near the lowest rib."

"But how came you to arrive here in season, my brave fellow?" said Rodolphe to Chourineur.

"If you desire it, my lord, I mean Mr. Rodolphe, I will commence at the beginning of the story."

"You are right: I am listening."

"You told me last night after returning from the country, where you had gone with poor Goualeuse, to try to find the Schoolmaster in the Cité, and inform him that I knew of a job, in which I did not wish to engage myself; but that if he desired my place, he had only to go to the Panier-Fleuri, Barrière de Bercey, and that he would find there a man who would make him acquainted with the affair."

"You are right."

"After leaving you, I turned toward the Cité and went to the White Rabbit, but did not find the Schoolmaster there. I then went to rue Saint Eloi, rue Fèves, rue Vieille-Draperie, but could not find him. At last I caught him, with the old hag Chouette, in Notre Dame square, at a small tailor's: a receiver of stolen goods, revender, and thief. They wished to dash out with the money they had stolen from the tall gentleman, and were purchasing second-hand clothes: Chouette was bargaining for a red shawl. I told my story to the Schoolmaster: he said that it pleased him much, and that he would be on hand. This morning, according to your directions yesterday, I came here and gave you the information. You said to me, 'My good fellow, come here to-night and you will see some agreeable entertainment.' You said nothing more; but I guessed what was going to happen. I said to myself, 'It is a plot to catch the Schoolmaster to-morrow, by baiting him with a job. He is a perfect wretch; he murdered the drover, and I will go.'"

"My error was, in not disclosing the entire plan to you. If I had done so, this misfortune would not have happened."

"That was your own concern, Mr. Rodolphe. All my business was to serve you; for I felt bound to you, as I said before, like a bull-dog to his master. I then said to myself, 'To-morrow is the wedding, therefore to-day shall be a holiday. Mr. Rodolphe has paid me for the two days I have lost, and for two more in advance;' for it is now three days since I have been near the quay Saint Paul, and as I am not a millionaire, work is somewhat necessary. So I said to myself, 'Since Mr. Rodolphe pays me for my time, to him my time belongs: I am going to employ it about his business.' This gave me another idea: 'The Schoolmaster is cunning,' said I, 'and he will suspect a mousetrap. It is true, that Mr. Rodolphe will propose the thing to him for *to-morrow*; but the scoundrel may come during the day to wander about the place, and mistrusting Mr. Rodolphe, will bring another thief with him; and, pretending that he is going to do the job to-morrow, actually do it *to-day* on his own hook.'"

"You have conjectured right: that was what took place; and Providence so ordered it, as to make you the instrument of my preservation."

"It is astonishing, Mr. Rodolphe, since I have known you, how many things happen to me which seem to be planned *above*. I have new thoughts in me, since you said to me, 'My fellow, you have not lost your heart and your honor.' Thunder! Mr. Rodolphe: such words are very consolatory to me, after being accustomed to hear people cry out, 'the wolf!' 'the mad dog!' the moment I drew near them."

"For some days past, you say have had novel thoughts?"

"Certainly, Mr. Rodolphe. I said to myself, 'Suppose *I* was acquainted with some man who had committed a crime in drunkenness or in the heat of passion: I would say to him, 'You have done very wrong, my fellow, but that is not all that is to be done in this world: God has not made in vain those who are starving, and freezing, and perishing. You will have the kindness, if you are earning forty sous a-day, to give twenty of them to sick old men, and poor children, who cannot labor; and especially, my fellow, if there is a man to be saved by risking your own life, you must do it; and after such good deeds, if you do not commence your wickedness again, I will always be your friend.' But pardon me, Mr. Rodolphe; I am prating, and you are curious to know the events which happened."

"I am pleased to hear you speak in this manner; besides, I shall learn soon enough the misfortune which has happened to my poor Murph. After I was compelled to acquiesce in the Schoolmaster's determination to execute the robbery to-day, I thought that I should not be separated from him an instant

during the whole of the dangerous undertaking. In that case, he would have killed me a thousand times before touching Murph; but fate seems to have ordered it otherwise. But go on with your story, my good fellow."

"Wishing then to employ myself about your business, Mr. Rodolphe," said Chourineur, continuing the narrative, 'I said to myself, 'I must hide in some position where I can watch the garden walls, which is the only entrance into the house. If I find a good corner said I, I will remain upon it all day, and particularly all the night, and then I shall be on hand for to-morrow.' I thought of this about two o'clock, at *Batiguolles*, where I went to eat my breakfast, after seeing you, Mr. Rodolphe. I returned to the Champs Elysees, and while seeking for a hiding place, I saw a little tavern a few steps from your door. I take up my position on the lower floor, near to the door, and called for a glass of wine and a peck of nuts; and in order not to create suspicions, said I was waiting for two friends—a hunchback and a tall woman. After I had installed myself, I watched constantly your door. It rained tremendously, and night was approaching."

"But why did you not come to my house?" said Rodolphe, interrupting him.

"You told me not to return until the next morning, and I did not dare to go before, for fear it would be an intrusion. I am but a liberated galley slave, and when a person like yourself, occasionally honors me with his society, I must only go when he says '*come*.' After all, however, if I see a spider on your coat, I take it and kill it without asking your leave: you understand. I was then at the window of the tavern, cracking my nuts and drinking my claret; and sneaking through the mist, I see Chouette and Bras-rouge's urchin, little Tortillard."

"Bras-rouge!" exclaimed Rodolphe; he is then the host of the subterranean cabaret, on the Champs Elysees."

"Yes, indeed: did you not know it?"

"No: I thought he lived in the Cité."

"He lives at the Cœur-Saignant also; he lives everywhere; and with his yellow scratch and peaked nose, is one of the shrewdest scoundrels living. But when I saw Chouette and Tortillard, I said to myself, 'it will be very hot soon;' and sure enough, Tortillard hobbles into one of the ditches opposite your door, as if he were playing the mole, to shelter himself from the rain. Chouette took the cap from her head, and putting it into her pocket, rang at your door. Mr. Murph, your friend, came and opened the door, and Chouette plays a thousand tricks while running round the garden, which I did not comprehend. At length, she came out, and having spoke a few words to Tortillard, he sneaked back into his hole, and the old hag disappeared. I then said to myself, 'hold on: don't let us get entangled: as Tortillard came with Chouette, the Schoolmaster and Rodolphe must be with Bras-rouge.'"

"Proceed."

"'And as Chouette has come to spy about the house, they intend to do the job to-night; and they are taking in Mr. Rodolphe, by making him think that they will do it to-morrow.' I therefore determined to go to the cave of Bras-rouge; but as the Schoolmaster might make the attack soon, I wished to go in and tell Mr. Murph to be on his guard; but I feared that the rat, Tortillard, would hear me ring the bell, and give the alarm to Chouette, which would spoil everything. And then, I thought that you might have made the arrangements for to-night. Thunder! nothing but doubts were buzzing through my brain: I was stupid; I saw nothing but fire; I knew not what to do. I said to myself, 'I will go out-doors, perhaps the air will counsel me;' it did counsel me. I take off my blouse and cravat; I go directly to Tortillard's hole, and seize the urchin by the skin of the back: he squeals, bites, and kicks in vain. I wound him up in my blouse as in a bag, tying one end with the sleeves, and the other with the cravat, leaving a space for him to breathe. There was a vegetable garden near by, so I took the bundle under my arm, and threw Tortillard over the fence into a bed of carrots. He squealed like a smothered pig, but could not be heard two steps off. I then climbed the tall tree which is opposite your door. In ten minutes, I heard some footsteps: it was still raining hard, and was so dark that the *baker* (devil,) could n't have seen to have trod on his own tail. I listened to a voice—it was Chouette's: 'Tortillard! Tortillard!' said she, in a low tone. 'Find if you can your Tortillard,' said I, in a whisper. 'The monkey has got tired of waiting in the rain,' said the Schoolmaster, swearing; 'if I catch him, I will flay him alive.' 'Perhaps he has gone home to tell us that it is a mouse-trap, after all,' said Chouette; 'the other fellow wished to do it at ten.' 'That is the very reason why we should do it at seven,' replied the Schoolmaster; 'you have seen money, and he who risks nothing, gets nothing; give me the crow-bar and the chisel.'"

"Where did they get their tools?" asked Rodolphe.

"Of Bras-rouge," continued Chourineur; "he keeps a house well stocked. In an instant the door was forced open. 'You remain here,' said the Schoolmaster; 'keep your eye open, and if you hear anything, sing out.' 'Thrust your dirk into the button-hole of your coat, in order to get at it quicker,' said Chouette:' and the Schoolmaster entered the garden. I said to myself, 'Mr. Rodolphe is not there; I know not whether he is dead or alive. I cannot help him at all, even the friend of my friend' I beg pardon, my lord."

"Proceed, proceed," said Rodolphe

"I said to myself, 'the Schoolmaster will murder Mr. Murph, who is not expecting this attack; and my first duty is to assist him.' I leaped from my tree; I rushed upon Chouette; with two blows, I finished her. She fell insensible to the earth. I now entered the garden: thunder! Mr. Rodolphe, it was too late."

"Poor Murph!"

"Hearing a noise at the door, he had probably come out to open it; he was struggling with the Schoolmaster, on the small piazza; and although wounded, he held him firm, without calling for help. 'Brave fellow!' said I, 'he is like a good dog, who bites without any bark;' and I throw myself upon them, rough and tumble, seizing the Schoolmaster by the leg, the only part of him disengaged. '*Vive la charte!* it is Chourineur!' said I; 'we must divide the victory, Mr. Murph.' 'Where did you come from, villain?' cried the Schoolmaster. 'You are too curious,' said I, squeezing one of his legs between my knees, and grasping one of his wings. I was lucky; it happened to be the good arm, the one with the dirk in it. 'Where is Rodolphe?' asked Mr. Murph, in the midst of his struggles."

"The brave man! the excellent man!' muttered Rodolphe, with deep feeling.

"'I do not know,' said I, 'perhaps this villain has murdered him;' and I wrestled with the Schoolmaster, who was trying to stick me with his dirk; but my breast was on his arm, and only his wrist was free. 'Are you alone?' said I to Mr. Murph, wrestling all the time with the Schoolmaster; 'there are people who will assist us within ten minutes' walk; let us cry for help.' 'No,' said Mr. Murph; 'since we have got hold of him, let us keep him; but I am weak, I am wounded.' 'Thunder!' said I, 'run after help. If you will only get away his knife, I can hold him alone, if I seize him with the right grip.' The Schoolmaster said nothing, but panted like an ox. Mr. Murph could not wrench from him his dirk; the man's grasp was like a vice. Finally, weighing all the time on his right arm, I pass my arms round him, and join my hands, as if I wished to embrace him. To clinch him in this fashion, had always been my ambition. Then I said to Mr. Murph, 'go quick; if you have any one to spare, pick up Chouette, whom I knocked down behind the garden gate.' I remained alone with the Schoolmaster; he knew what to expect."

"He did not know it, nor you either, by brave fellow," said Rodolphe; his features contracting into one of those expressions of malignant ferocity we have before described.

Chourineur, in astonishment, said to Rodolphe, "I thought the Schoolmaster knew what to expect; for I was not in sport, I assure you. We were struggling with each other, partly on the ground, and partly on the last stone of the piazza. I had my arms around his body, my cheeks against his own, and I could hear him grind his teeth. It was dark, and the rain poured in torrents, and the lamp in the vestibule gave us but little light. I had pressed one of his legs between mine, but his back was so strong, that he raised us both together a foot from the ground; he attempted to bite me, but could not. Never had I felt so vigorous! My heart throbbed, but it throbbed in the right place! I said to myself, 'I am like one who attacks a mad dog to prevent him from killing people.' 'Let me go,' said the Schoolmaster, 'and I will do you no harm.' 'You are a coward, are you,' said I 'have you no courage but when you are victorious? You would not have dared to kill the drover at Poissy, if he had been as strong as I am.' 'No, but I am going to murder you, as I murdered him.' And saying this, he struggled so violently, throwing his legs about at the same time, that he turned me on my side, but I had still my hands clenched behind his head, and my breast on his right arm. The moment his legs were free, he made such good use of them, that for a time he had the advantage; he half turned me over, and had I not pressed on to the hand which held the dirk, I should not now have been alive. At that moment, I was obliged to loosen my fingers. I said to myself, 'I am underneath, and he will kill me:' never was I in a position which I liked less. Mr. Rodolphe had told me that I had not

yet lost my heart, nor my honor. I felt that it was true. I now perceived Chouette standing on the portico, with her red shawl. 'Finette,' cried the Schoolmaster, 'I have dropped my dirk; pick it up and stab him between the shoulders.' And Chouette was searching for it, like the bird of ill-omen, which she is. At length she saw the dagger, and went to seize it, when I kicked her in the stomach, and knocked her down. She soon however recovered, and again approached me. I could not hold out much longer. I still clung round the Schoolmaster, but he gave me from underneath such hard blows in the jaws, that I was about to give up. I was beginning to be dizzy, when I saw two or three armed chaps, coming on to the portico, with Mr. Murph leaning upon the doctor. They seized Chouette and the Schoolmaster, and bound them. I jumped on Chouette; I remembered the tooth which she had torn from Goualonse's jaw. I seized her by the arm, and twisting it round, said, 'where is Mr. Rodolphe?' She would not tell me at the first twist, but at the second, replied, 'At Bras-rouge's, in the cave of the Cœur-Saignant.' I stopped to take Tortillard from his carrot-bed, as it was in my way, but I found nothing there but my blouse; he had gnawed himself out with his teeth. I arrived at the Cœur-Saignant. I took Bras-rouge by the throat: 'Where is the young man,' said I, 'that came here to-night with the Schoolmaster?' 'Do not hold me so tight, and I will tell you. They wished to play him a trick, and locked him up in the cave, in my cellar. Let us open the door to him.' We went down, but could find no one there. 'He must have gone when I did not see him,' said Bras-rouge; 'for you observe that there is no one here.' I was about to depart in despair, when I saw, by the light of the lantern, that there was another door. I opened it, and received a bucket of water in my face. I saw you hanging by your hands to the threshold. I took you out and brought you here upon my back, since there was no one to run for a carriage. That is all, Mr. Rodolphe; and I can say, without feigning it, that I am very much delighted."

"My good fellow," said Rodolphe, "I am indebted to you for my life; you have a heart above reproach, and you share the sentiment of gratitude which now animates me. I will repay you in every way. I feel a great anxiety for the friend you have so courageously saved, and I will devise a frightful vengeance for the wretch who nearly murdered you both."

"I agree with you, Mr. Rodolphe: none but the blackest traitor would rush upon you, and plunge you fifteen feet; and while you were faint from the fall, drag you into another hole to be drowned. The Schoolmaster will deserve his punishment: he confessed to me that he had murdered the drover."

"David, will you go presently, and inquire about Murph?" said Rodolphe, paying no attention to Chourineur's remark; "and after you have attended to his comfort, return to me."

The negro departed.

"Do you know where the Schoolmaster is, my good fellow?" asked Rodolphe of Chourineur.

"In a room below, with Chouette. Are you going to send for the guard?"

"No."

"You would not let him go, would you? I repeat it, he is a mad dog."

"He will no longer bite any one: be sure of that."

"You are then going to shut him up somewhere?"

"No: in half an hour he will leave this house."

"Who? the Schoolmaster!"

"Yes."

"Without gendarmes?"

"Yes."

"What! will he go out free?"

"Free!"

"And all alone?"

"Yes, all alone; and he will go where he pleases," said Rodolphe, with a smile which frightened Chourineur.

The black physician now returned.

"How is Murph?"

"He sleeps, my lord," said David mournfully, "and his breathing is still much oppressed."

"There is yet some danger?"

"His situation is critical, my lord, but I have great hope."

"Vengeance! vengeance!" said Rodolphe, with cool and concentrated fury; and he spoke a few words in a low voice, to David.

The negro shuddered.

"You hesitate," said Rodolphe; "but I have frequently suggested this idea before: the time has now arrived to put it in practice."

"I do not hesitate, my lord: I approve of your idea. It discloses a method of penal reform, worthy the attention of legislators; for this mode of punishment would frequently be simple, efficacious and just. In this case it is thoroughly deserved; for in addition to the crimes which committed him to the galleys for life, he has murdered the drover, to say nothing of his frustrated attempts upon the life of Murph and your lordship."

"Yes; and he will have before him the boundless sphere of repentance. Do you understand me?"

"We will concur in the same work."

"After a moment's silence, Rodolphe asked, "Will five thousand francs suffice for his support?"

"Perfectly well, my lord."

"My good fellow," said Rodolphe to the astonished Chourineur, "I have a few words to say to David. Meanwhile, do you go into the next room, and you will find on the writing-desk a pocket-book; you will take from it five bank-bills, of a thousand francs each, and bring them to me."

"And who are they for?" exclaimed the reluctant Chourineur.

"For the Schoolmaster. You will, at the same time, order him to be brought here."

CHAPTER XXI..... THE PUNISHMENT.

THE scene we are about to describe, took place in the large parlor, which was hung with scarlet drapery, and brilliantly illuminated. The long dressing-gown of black velvet, which enveloped Rodolphe's form, imparted to his countenance an unusually pallid hue. He was seated before a large table, covered with cloth, on which is displayed the pocket-book stolen from Tom, the one which belonged to the brigand himself, the gilded chain to which the *Saint Esprit* was suspended, taken from the neck of Chouette, the bloody dagger which had penetrated the side of Murph, the iron bar which had forced the door, and the five bills for a thousand francs each, which Chourineur had produced. The black physician was seated upon one side of the table, Chourineur upon the other.

The Schoolmaster, firmly bound, and unable to move his limbs, is placed near the middle of the room, in an arm-chair on castors. The men who introduced the bandit now retired, and Rodolphe, David and Chourineur, are left alone with the assassin. Rodolphe was no longer enraged, but subdued, calm, collected. He is about to take into his own hands the solemn and severe attributes of justice. The doctor was pensive, and Chourineur, filled with vague fears, is unable to detach his looks from Rodolphe. The Schoolmaster is livid with fear. A legal arrest would have appeared less formidable to him: his audacity would have never abandoned him before an ordinary tribunal; but this novel mode of procedure filled him with surprise and indefinite anxiety. He was in the power of Rodolphe, whom he had once considered as a miserable mechanic, incapable of any crime but treachery to himself, and whom he had wished to sacrifice to his suspicions, or to the hope of alone profiting by the robbery. But now, he appeared to him in the terrible and imposing form of Justice herself. The silence of the scene was only disturbed by the falling of the rain on the pavements without.

Rodolphe now addressed the Schoolmaster.

"Escaped from the galleys at Rochefort, to which you were sentenced for life, for the crimes of forgery, larceny and murder, your name is ANSELME DURESNEL."

"It is false! let it be proved!" said the Schoolmaster, casting around him a wild and frightened gaze.

"How!" exclaimed Chourineur; "were we not together at Rochefort?"

Rodolphe made a sign to Chourineur, enjoining silence.

"You are," continued Rodolphe, "Anselme Duresnel: you will confess it soon. You have recently murdered a drover on the road to Paissy."

"It is false!"

"You will confess it soon."

The brigand regarded Rodolphe with surprise.

"This night you introduced yourself here; and in order to rob the master of this house, have stabbed him."

"It was you who inveigled me here," said the Schoolmaster, recovering in some measure his assurance. "I was attacked, and I defended myself."

"The man whom you struck did not attack you; he was unarmed. I proposed to you the deed, it is true; and I will tell you with what motive. Day before yesterday, after having robbed a man and a woman in the Cité, you offered to slay me for a thousand francs."

"I heard it," exclaimed Chourineur.

The Schoolmaster cast upon him a look of ferocious hate.

"There was no need of my tempting you to commit a crime."

"You are not an authorized magistrate; I will no longer reply to you."

"This is the reason why I proposed the robbery to you: I knew you were an escaped convict. You were acquainted with the parents of an unfortunate female, whose life has been rendered an uninterrupted succession of misery by your accomplice, Chouette. I wished to draw you here by the attraction of crime—the only one, which has not lost all influence upon you. Once in my power, I had determined to give you the choice, either of being surrendered into the hands of justice, which would make you pay, with your own life, the penalty for murdering the drover——"

"It is false! I am not the man!"

"——or to be conveyed, by my care, beyond the boundary of France to a place of perpetual seclusion; on condition that you would make the disclosures which I required. You had been sentenced to perpetual imprisonment, which sentence you have broken. By placing you henceforth where you could do no harm, I was rendering a most valuable service to society; and, by the information which I should extort, would have been the means of restoring a female, more unfortunate than blameworthy, to her family. Such was at first my project. It was not legal; but by your sentence to perpetual imprisonment, and by your new crimes, you are doubly outlawed. Yesterday, a providential revelation informed me of your name."

"It is false! My name is not Duresnel."

Rodolphe took from the table the chain of Chouette, and disclosed to the Schoolmaster the small Saint Esprit. "Sacrilegious wretch!" exclaimed Rodolphe, in a threatening tone. "You have prostituted this holy relic—three times holy—by giving it to an infamous woman. Your son wore this pious gift, to whom it descended through the hands of his mother and grandmother."

The Schoolmaster, astounded at this discovery, hung his head without a reply.

"Yesterday I learned, that fifteen years ago, you forcibly carried away your son from his mother, and that you alone possess the secret of his existence. Your new crime has added an additional motive for arresting you, to those which existed before. I say nothing of injuries to me personally; it is not those which I revenge; but this night, you have once more, unprovoked, shed innocent blood. The man you assassinated came to you in confidence, not suspecting your blood-thirsty designs; and asked you, in kindness, what you wished? 'Your money or your life;' and you struck him with your stiletto."

"Such was the account which Mr. Murph gave, when I first went to his assistance," said David.

"It is false! he lies!"

"Murph never lies," said Rodolphe, calmly. "Your crimes demand a signal punishment. You have introduced yourself, with arms in your hands, into this garden; you have stabbed a man, in order to rob him; you have added a new murder to your manifold crimes: you are going to die. Out of compassion to your wife and son, I will spare you the disgrace of the scaffold. It will be said that you perished in some felonious assault. Prepare yourself! the weapons are loaded!"

The countenance of Rodolphe was implacable.

The Schoolmaster had observed, as he passed through the adjoining apartment, two men with loaded carbines in their hands. This name was known. He thought that they would hasten his execution, in order to bury in darkness his last crime, and spare his family this new disgrace. Like other criminals, this man was cowardly as he was ferocious. He trembled convulsively; his lips were blanched; and with a strangled voice, he exclaimed:

"Mercy!"

"There is no mercy for you: if your brains are not blown out here, the scaffold is waiting for you."

"I prefer the scaffold. I shall, at least, have two or three months to live; and what is it to you, since I shall be afterward punished. Pardon! pardon!"

"But your wife, your son: they bear your name!"

"My name is already disgraced. Spare me but for one week! Mercy!"

"What! Have you not even that contempt for life, which is often found in great criminals?" said Rodolphe, in disgust.

"Besides, the law forbids you to take justice into your own hands," said the Schoolmaster, with much assurance.

"The law!" exclaimed Rodolphe. "Dare you invoke the law, who for twenty years have lived in open hostility to it, and in war upon society?"

The brigand cast down his eyes in silence. At length he said, in a more humble tone, "Let me at least live, through pity."

"Will you tell me where your son now is?"

"Yes, yes: I will tell you all that I know about him."

"Will you tell me who are the parents of the unfortunate girl, whose childhood was tortured by Chouette?"

"There are papers in my pocket-book, which will lead to the discovery. Her mother is a great lady."

"Where is your son?"

"Will you permit me to live?"

"Confess all first."

"But when you know all?——" said the Schoolmaster, with hesitation.

"Have you killed him?"

"No, no: I confided him to one of my confederates, who, when I was arrested, made his escape."

"What has he done with him?"

"He brought him up, and gave him an education which prepared him for commercial pursuits, in order that he might be of assistance to us: but I will not disclose the sequel, until you promise not to kill me."

"What! conditions, miserable one!"

"Not conditions, but pity. Let me be arrested, charged only with the crime of to-day; speak not of the other. Let me have a chance to save my head!"

"You desire to live then?"

"Oh, yes! yes! Who knows? One cannot foresee the future," said the brigand, hopefully; the possibility of some new evasion entering his mind.

"You wish to live? no matter in what situation, to live?"

"Yes; even in the galleys—for a month, for a week. Let me not die to-day."

"Confess all your crimes, and you shall live."

"Shall I live? Truly, shall I live?"

"Hear me. In pity for your wife and son, consent to die to-day."

"Oh! no, no! do not retract your promise. The most miserable mode of existence that can be devised, is preferable to death."

"You desire it?"

"Yes! yes! yes!"

"And you will not complain?"

"I will never complain."

"Your son—what has become of him?"

"The friend to whom I alluded, taught him book-keeping, in order to place him in a banking-house, that he might give us some information: a plan was agreed upon between us. Although I was at Rochefort, but meditating my escape, I directed the enterprise; and my accomplice and myself corresponded by means of figures."

"You absolutely astound me! There are crimes of which I did not consider human nature capable. Confess it: confess why you wished your son to obtain a situation in a banking-house."

"In order that he might act as our spy; and, having inspired his employers with confidence, assist us in any enterprise we might propose."

"Oh Heaven! his own son!" exclaimed Rodolphe in horror, hiding his face in his hands.

"It was only to commit a forgery," said the villain; "and when it was disclosed to him, he was indignant, and would not render us the service which we required. After a violent quarrel with the man to whose charge I had intrusted him, he suddenly disappeared, and has defeated all the efforts we have made to discover him. You will find in my pocket-book, a memorandum of the steps which my friend took in order to find him, through fear of his revealing the existence of the conspiracy. The last house which he lived in, was No. 14 rue de Temple, under the name of François Germain: the direction you will find in the memorandum. You see I disclose all—all. Keep your promise, and have me arrested only for the robbery of to-night."

"And the cattle-drover of Poissy?"

"It is impossible to convict me of that act: there are no proofs. I confess it to you, in order to show my candor; but before the judge I will deny it."

"You avow that murder, then?"

"I was in misery, I know not how to live, and Chouette advised me to do that deed; but I repent of it now, as you see by my confession. If you would be so generous as not to surrender me into the hands of justice, I give you my word of honor never to commit a crime again."

"You shall live, and I will not deliver you to the civil power."

"Do you pardon me, then?" said the Schoolmaster, not believing what he had heard—"do you pardon me, then?"

"I myself will judge and punish you," said Rodolphe, in a decided tone. "I will not place you in the hands of justice,

because you would be sent to the galleys or the scaffold; and that must not be—it must not be. What! to the galleys, in order that you may again, by your violence and your wickedness, tyrannize over the most infamous of mankind? to gratify again your brutal instincts of oppression? to be feared and abhorred by all?—for even crime has its pride—and to be illustrious for your monstrosity among the most debased of criminals? No, no: your iron muscles defy the severity of labor and the scourge of the guard: chains may break, walls may be pierced, ramparts may be scaled, and you would again break from your prison-house like a ferocious beast of prey, marking your passage by rapine and blood; for nothing is safe from your gigantic strength and your murderous knife: and that must not be—no, it must not be. Since you would not be safe there, how can society be protected from your rage, except by the axe of the executioner?"

"It is then my death which you desire!" exclaimed the brigand; "it is my death!"

"Death! no; you are too cowardly to die: you fear it so much, that you never could believe it at your door! In your anxiety to live, in your stubborn hope, you would take refuge against the anguish of its formidable approach; and however rash and deceitful your confidence of escape might be, it would veil from you the expiatory horrors of the punishment: you would only believe in its actual presence, while under the knife of the guillotine; and then, stupefied by terror, it would only be a senseless carcase which would be offered up as a holocaust to the manes of your victims. That cannot be. The hope of escape would attend you even to the last moment of life; it would hang its sweet and consoling images on the walls of your dungeon, until fear blinded your eyes. No, no! I will not be deceived by such a weak device of the Evil One. If you do not repent, nothing shall await you in this life but despair."

"What have I done to this man? who is he? what does he wish of me?" exclaimed the Schoolmaster, bewildered at the words of Rodolphe.

"If, on the contrary," continued he, "you could have braved death with composure, I would not have granted the boon: for to you, the scaffold would be but a bloody theatre, where, like other criminals, you could make a parade of your atrocities; and, indifferent to a miserable existence, damn your soul by a final blasphemy. I will not permit this: it is not good for mankind to see the condemned criminal sport with the avenging knife, sneer at the executioner, and blow away, in a jest, the divine spark which the Creator has kindled within us. 'Any crime may be washed away,' said the Saviour; 'but only for him who seeks, by repentance, the interposition of atoning blood.' From the tribunal to the scaffold, the transition is too sudden: you must not, therefore, die thus."

To the Schoolmaster, there was something more frightful in this vague uncertainty than death itself. David and Chourineur watched Rodolphe with anxiety: they listened with shuddering to his bitter words, merciless as the blade of the axe; but their hearts painfully assented to the truths which he uttered.

"Anselme Duresnel, you shall not be sent to the galleys—you shall not die."

"But what do you wish? You must be sent from hell itself!"

"Listen to me, then," said Rodolphe, elevating himself in a solemn manner, and extending his hand with an air of menacing authority. "You have most criminally abused your strength; I will paralyze your strength: the most vigorous have trembled before you; you shall tremble before the feeblest! You have plunged the creatures of God in eternal night: the darkness of your eternity shall commence upon this side of the grave—this very day—this very moment! Your punishment will be as signal as your crimes have been. But," continued Rodolphe, in a compassionate tone, "the awful penalty I shall inflict, will at least spread out before you the unlimited bourn of repentance. I should be as criminal as yourself, if, while punishing you, I only gratified a vengeance, however just. Far from being as fruitless as your death, your punishment should be productive of repentance: far from being your damnation, it should be the road to your redemption. In order to remove from you the power of temptation, I will close against you all the splendors of creation: I will plunge you into the impenetrable darkness of night. Alone with the memory of your crimes, you shall incessantly contemplate their enormity. Yes; for ever isolated from the external world, you shall be compelled to turn in your thoughts upon yourself; and then I hope that your brow, bronzed by infamy, will blush with shame; that your soul, hardened by ferocity, corroded by crime, will soften by repentance. Each word, which is now a blasphemy, will then be a prayer. In your power, you are hard-hearted and merciless: in your weakness, you will be gentle and kind. Your heart, now steeled against remorse, will one day bleed for your victims. You have degraded the reason with which God has endowed you; you have reduced it to a mere beastly instinct for prey and for blood: but one day your reason will be revivified by your expiation—will be exalted by the consciousness of pardon. Thus far, you have not spared what the ferocious monarch of the woods respects—the female and her offspring: but the remainder of your life will be devoted to atoning for your crimes, and your last prayer will crave from God the boon of dying in the arms of your wife and child."

Rodolphe uttered these words under the influence of deep emotion.

The Schoolmaster seemed utterly indifferent to the language which was addressed to him. He was even almost reassured by the compassionate tone of his judge's voice, and his insolence increasing as his fears diminished, he said with a coarse laugh: "Are we guessing conundrums? are we reciting our catechism here?"

The negro looked at Rodolphe with anxiety; he anticipated an explosion of anger. It had no such effect; for the young man shook his head with an indescribable expression of sadness, and said:

"Do it, David! and may God punish me alone, if I am in error;" and Rodolphe buried his face in his hands.

At the words, "do it David," the negro rang a bell.

Two men attired in black, now entered: with a sign the physician indicated a door which led to a side-room.

The two men rolled in the chair on which the Schoolmaster was bound, firmly fastened to the back of it, by means of a scarf passed round his neck and shoulders.

"Bind his forehead to the chair by means of a handkerchief, and gag him with another," said the physician, without entering the room.

"Do you intend to cut my throat? Mercy! mercy!" cried the brigand. His cries now ceased; the two men reappeared, and left the room.

"My lord?" said for the last time the negro to Rodolphe, with an interrogating accent.

"Do it!" replied he, without changing his position.

David slowly entered the side-room.

"Mr. Rodolphe, I am afraid," said Chourineur. "Speak to me; am I dreaming! what is he doing to the Schoolmaster? I hear nothing, and this silence is frightful."

David came out of the side-room—he was livid with fear; his lips were blanched, and he rang the bell. The two men came in again.

"Bring back the chair."

The Schoolmaster was brought back.

"Remove the handkerchief from his mouth."

"Do you wish to torture me?" exclaimed the Schoolmaster, with more passion than pain; "why did you prick my eyes thus? Is it to torment me, that you have extinguished the lights in this room as you have done in the other?"

A moment of awful silence ensued.

"You are blind!" said David, in a saddened voice.

"It is not true; it is not possible!" said the Schoolmaster, struggling convulsively: "it is the room which is dark."

"Remove his bonds: let him rise, let him walk," said Rodolphe.

The two men released the Schoolmaster. He rose abruptly, stepped forward, tottered, and fell back into his chair, raising his hands on high.

"Give him this pocket-book," said Rodolphe.

The negro placed a small wallet in the trembling hands of the Schoolmaster.

"There is in that pocket-book," said Rodolphe, "a sufficient sum to insure you shelter and food for the remainder of your days, in some secluded spot. You are now free: go, and repent."

"Blind!" muttered the Schoolmaster, mechanically taking the pocket-book into his hands.

"Open the door and let him depart," said Rodolphe.

The doors were thrown open with a noise.

"Blind! blind! blind!" repeated the astounded brigand. "My God! my God! is it true?"

"You are free, you have money. Go."

"But I cannot go; how shall I go! I cannot see!" cried he, in despair: "it is an awful crime thus to abuse your power."

"It is a crime to abuse power," said Rodolphe in a solemn tone: "how have you employed yours?"

"Death! yes, I should have preferred to die, than thus be at the mercy of everybody; to be afraid of everything: a child may beat me now—what shall I do? Oh, my God! what shall I do!"

"You have money."

"They will steal it from me," said the brigand.

"Steal from you? do you understand the words? Steal from *you*, who have spent your life in stealing!"

"For God's sake!" said the Schoolmaster, "let some one lead me; what shall I do in the street! Kill me! kill me! I ask for my death."

"That would close the door of repentance."

"I never will repent! I will be damned before I repent! I will spend the remainder of my days in seeking revenge!" and grinding his teeth and shaking his fists in rage, he arose from his chair.

At the first step, he stumbled and fell.

"No, no! I cannot move, and yet I am strong. I am much to be pitied, but nobody will pity me!" and he wept.

It is impossible to describe the expression of blank amazement upon Chourineur's countenance, during the whole of this terrible scene; his wild and rough features now gleamed with compassion as he approached Rodolphe, and said to him in a low voice:

"Mr. Rodolphe, he has perhaps only what he deserves, for he was the greatest scoundrel living; he wished to kill me to-night, but now that he is blind, he weeps. Thunder! it gives me pain—he cannot walk—he may be crushed to death in the streets. Will you not let me take him to some place where he will at least be safe."

"Certainly," said Rodolphe, moved by the generosity of Chourineur, and taking him by the hand.

Chourineur approached the brigand and touched him on the shoulder; the Schoolmaster shuddered: "Who touches me?" said he, in a low voice.

"It is I, Chourineur."

"Have you come for revenge, also?"

"You are not able to guide yourself; take my arm and I will lead you."

"You! you?"

"Yes, I pity you: come, come."

"You wish to lay a snare for me."

"You know that I am no traitor—I will not abuse your misfortune: come, come, it is now daylight."

"Is it daylight! I shall never again see the light of the day!" exclaimed the Schoolmaster.

Rodolphe could endure the scene no longer: he left the room in company with David, and made a sign to the two menials to depart. Chourineur and the Schoolmaster remained alone.

"Is it true, that there is money in the wallet which they gave me?" asked the brigand, after a moment's silence.

"Yes; I placed five thousand francs in it myself: with that, you can board in some corner of the country for the remainder of your days; or, if you wish, I will conduct you to the ogress's."

"No! she would rob me."

"Shall we go to Red-arm's?"

"No! he would throw me into his cave, and pillage me."

"Where then shall I take you?"

"I do not know. You are not a thief, Chourineur: hide my pocket-book in my vest, that Chouette may not see it; for she will rob me."

"Chouette! She has been carried to the Hospital Beaujon: while fighting with both of you last night, I mutilated one of her legs."

"Oh! what will become of me, with this black curtain constantly drawn before my eyes? and if on this black curtain, I should see the pale and ghastly faces of those I have——" and then, shuddering, he said in a low voice to Chourineur, "The man of last night: is he dead!"

"No."

"So much the better;" and then the brigand, starting into a rage, said: "It is you, Chourineur; you, who are the cause of this! Villain! if it had not been for you, I could have *cooled* that man, and have carried away the money. If I am blind, it is your fault: yes, it's your fault."

"Think no more of that: it will do you no good. Come; will you proceed or not? I am tired; I wish to sleep. I have been idle long enough, and to-morrow I must return to my work. I will lead you where you wish to go, and then I shall go home to my bed."

"But I do not know where to go: at my lodgings I should be compelled to say——"

"Well, hear me. Will you come to my sleeping-place, for one or two days! I may find for you some honest people, who, without knowing your character, may take you into their house. I know a good man who lives at Port Saint Nicholas—his mother lives at Saint Mandé—a worthy woman, who is poor; perhaps she may take charge of you. Will you come, or not?"

"You may be trusted, Chourineur: I will go with you. My money will be safe, for you never stole: you are good—are generous."

"Well, that is enough: I wish no more compliments."

"It is because I am grateful to you, Chourineur: you cherish neither hatred nor malice," said the brigand, with humility; "you are much better than I am."

"Thunder! I hope I am! Mr. Rodolphe told me that I had a heart."

"But who is that man?" exclaimed the Schoolmaster; "he cannot be a man: he must be a demon."

Chourineur shrugged his shoulders, and said, "Shall we start?"

"We are going to your house, are we not, Chourineur?"

"Yes."

"Will you swear that you have no grudge against me?"

"Yes, I swear it."

"And you are sure that the man is not dead?"

"I am quite sure of it."

"It will be one less, at any rate," said the brigand in a low voice; and, leaning on Chourineur's arms, the two convicts departed from the house in the alley of Veuves.

CHAPTER XXII. ..... ISLE-ADAM.

A MONTH had elapsed since the events recorded in the last chapter. We will now convey the reader to a small village, delightfully situated upon the banks of the Oise, near a large forest. In the provinces, the smallest trifles are regarded as events of the greatest importance; and the idle loungers in the church-square of Isle-Adam, were now speculating upon the arrival of the gentleman who had recently purchased, from the widow Dumont, the largest butchering establishment in the village. The new proprietor was undoubtedly wealthy, for he had ordered the shop to be painted and thoroughly furnished. For three weeks the laborers had been employed night and day. A lattice-work of gilded bronze inclosed the entire stall, thus allowing to circulate through it a free and uninterrupted current of air. On each side two pillars, surmounted with bulls' heads with gilded horns, supported the entablature that was destined to receive the sign of the proprietor. The remainder of the establishment consisted of a dwelling-house, two stories high, painted in imitation of stone-work, with blinds of a light-gray color. The work was all completed except the sign, and the idlers were waiting impatiently to read the name of the widow's successor. It was finally produced; and the curious read, in large gilt letters, on a black ground, this inscription: "FRANCŒUR, MERCHANT-BUTCHER." The curiosity of the loungers was but partially gratified. "Who is Mr. Francœur?" was the question upon every lip. One of the most inquisitive went to investigate the matter, by inquiring of one of the frank and healthy butcher-boys, who was engaged in arranging the stall, what he knew about his new master. The boy replied that he had never seen him, for the property had been purchased by his agent; but that he did not doubt that his boss would do everything in his power, to merit the patronage of the burgesses of Isle-Adam. The obliging disposition manifested by the boy, and the excellent arrangements of the shop, disposed the idlers favorably to Mr. Francœur, and many of them promised him their patronage. Two hours after the shop was opened, a *carriole*, drawn by a strong horse, entered the carriage-gate that opened upon the church-square, and two individuals alighted from the vehicle. One was Murph, completely recovered from his wounds; the other, Chourineur. At the risk of repeating a truism, we must say that the effect of dress is so great, that the *habitus* of the *tapis-franc* was no longer recognized, under the respectable garments which he now wore. His countenance had undergone the same change: he seemed to have dropped his ferocity at the same time with his rags; and as he walked with his hands thrust into the pocket of his large overcoat, and his freshly-shaved chin sunk in the folds of a white cravat with worked corners, he might have been mistaken for the most harmless and unpretending artisan in the world. Murph fastened the horse to an iron ring in the wall, and motioning Chourineur to follow him, they entered a room with a low ceiling and furniture of black walnut, situated at the rear of the shop, with two windows opening into the yard, where the horse was seen pawing impatiently. Murph seemed very much at home; for he opened a sideboard, and taking from it a decanter of brandy, said to Chourineur:

"As the air is rather sharp, suppose we take a glass of brandy and water."

"If it is the same to you, Mr. Murph, I believe I will not drink."

"What! refuse a dosager?"

"Yes. I am too happy; my joy is sufficiently warming."

"How so?"

"Yesterday, when you came to see me at the Port Saint Nicholas, where I was landing my wood in a hurry, in order to keep warm; it was the first time I had seen you since the gray-haired negro blinded the Schoolmaster. It was the only thing he ever came honestly by, it is true. But, by thunder! it moved me; and Mr. Rodolphe, who is ordinarily so good-natured, put on such angry looks that I was frightened."

"Well, well: proceed."

"You said to me, 'good day, Chourineur;' 'good day,' says I, 'Mr. Murph, I am glad to see you looking so well. Where is Mr. Rodolphe?' 'He was obliged to leave town the next day after the night in the alley, and he has forgotten you, my boy.' 'Well, if Mr. Rodolphe has forgotten me,' says I, 'I am sorry for it.'"

"I merely intended to say, that he had forgotten to reward your services; but he will remember them with gratitude for ever."

"These words do me good. Thunder! I shall never forget him, depend upon it. He has told me, that 'I have not lost my heart, nor my honor;' that's enough."

"Unfortunately, his lordship departed without giving any directions respecting you, my boy; and as I have nothing but what he gives me, I cannot repay you the debt which I owe on my own account."

"Come, come, Mr. Murph; you must be joking."

"But why the devil didn't you come back to the alley of Veuves, after that eventful night? My lord would not have then departed, without remembering you."

"As Mr. Rodolphe did not send for me, I supposed he needed me no more."

"But you certainly must have known, that he wished to manifest his gratitude in some manner."

"It is enough, since you say that Mr. Rodolphe has not forgotten me."

"Well, well: we will speak no more of it; only I had great difficulty in finding you. You do not go to the ogress's now?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"Oh, it is a foolish idea of mine."

"Very well; but let me hear it. You said to me, 'you were glad to have met with me,' and are perhaps still glad."

"That's the reason of my joy, Mr. Murph: when you came yesterday to my wood-yard, and told me, 'that although you were not rich, you could get me a situation, where, with less work than on the quay, I could earn four francs a day.' Four francs a day! *Vive la charte!* I could not believe it; it is the pay of a lieutenant! And I told you how much I should be delighted. You said to me, 'that I must not be dressed in such a miserable manner, or it would displease my employer.' I answered, 'that I have no money to buy any other clothing.' You told me to 'come to the Temple.' I followed you, and selected the finest clothes at Mother Hubert's. You advance the money, and I was soon decked out as finely as a bar-tender or a dentist. You made an appointment with me, at the gate Saint Denis, by the dawn of day. I find you there with your carriole, and here we are."

"Well, what is there to regret in all this?"

"Why, to be nicely dressed, will spoil me; for when I go back to my old blouse and rags, I shall be ashamed of them. Besides, to earn four francs a day, when I never earned two before, is too sudden prosperity: it can't last. I had rather sleep constantly on my old straw bed, than to sleep for five or six nights in a feather-bed. That is my character."

"Your remarks have some truth in them; but I should think it would be still better to sleep constantly in a feather-bed."

"Certainly, if at the same time you can have plenty of bread. But I perceive that you have a butcher's shop somewhere in the neighborhood," said Chourineur, hearing the blows of the cleaver, and observing a quarter of beef hanging up in the yard.

"Yes, my brave fellow; it belongs to a friend of mine; and while the horse is blowing, suppose we take a walk through it."

"Indeed, I should admire to do so. It will remind me of my youthful days, although Montfaucon was my stall, and horses my beeves. It is strange, but if I had had any property, I should have liked to continue a butcher. To start off on a good horse, and purchase cattle at the fairs; to come home to a good fire, and warm yourself if cold; to dry yourself if wet; to find there a good fat healthy wife, with half a dozen little snobs, who would fumble in your pockets, to see if you had brought them any gingerbread; and then in the morning, at the butchering-house, to seize a good fierce bullock by the horns; to pull him in through the ring, and knock him on the head; skin him, dress him, hang him up—by jingo! it would not be bad. Thunder! it would have been my ambition, as Goualeuse's was to eat sugar-sticks, when she was small. By the way, speaking of the poor girl, as she has not returned to the *tapis-franc*, I suppose Mr. Rodolphe has provided for her in the country. It was a very charitable act, for the poor child has no inclination to sin."

"I am of your opinion. But will you come with me and see the shop, while the horse rests?"

Chourineur and Murph now entered the stall, whence they proceeded to the stable, where three magnificent oxen were fastened among scores of sheep; the barn, the carriage-house, the slaughter-house: all the appurtenances of the establishment. When they had seen everything except the upper story, Murph said: "Confess, Chourineur, that my friend is a happy fellow; this house and establishment belongs to him, saying nothing of a thousand crowns cash, which is invested in his business. He is thirty years of age; has an iron constitution; is as strong as one of his own oxen; and is fond of his trade. That honest boy, whom we saw below, worthily fills his place when he has gone to the cattle-market. Has he not good reason to be happy?"

Oh yes, he has, Mr. Murph," said Chourineur; "but strange as it may seem, there are happy men, and unhappy ones, Mr. Murph. Even I am going to earn four francs a day, and that too, when a great many people are not earning half that sum."

"But will you not come up and see the remainder of the house?"

"Willingly, Mr. Murph."

"By the way, the person who is going to employ you, is up stairs."

"Indeed! my employer up there! Why did you not tell me of it before?"

"I will explain the reason soon."

"But wait a moment;" said Chourineur, in a sad and embarrassed manner, and taking Murph by the arm, "there is one thing which Mr. Rodolphe knows, but which perhaps he has not told to you, and which I do not wish to have concealed from my employer, because, should he discover it, he may be disgusted with me."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean——"

"What?"

"That I have been a convict in the galleys," said Chourineur, in an abashed tone.

"Indeed!" said Murph.

"But I never have defrauded anybody; and I had rather starve than steal. But I have committed a greater crime than theft," continued Chourineur, hanging down his head. "I once killed a man in the heat of passion: such is the fact; but people do not like to employ galley slaves, and I confess that it is no great recommendation. That has always prevented me from finding employment anywhere else than on the quays, for I have always said, 'here, I am a discharged convict; take me or not, just as you please.' I had rather be refused at once, than obtain employment under false pretences. I wish you to disclose the whole of it to my present employer. If he refuses me, tell me of it at once, and I will turn on my heel."

"But you had better come up, in any event," said Murph.

Chourineur followed Murph up the staircase; a door was thrown open, and they found themselves in the presence of Rodolphe.

"My good Murph, I have a few words to say to Chourineur; will you retire for a few moments?" said his lordship.

CHAPTER XXIII..... THE RECOMPENSE.

"Vive la Charte! I am quite happy to see you, Mr. Rodolphe, or rather, my lord," said Chourineur, as he approached, with sincere gratification depicted in his countenance; for generous hearts are as strongly attached by services rendered, as by services received.

"I wish you a happy day, my good fellow. I am delighted myself with seeing you."

"How came you here? Mr. Murph must have been jesting, when he said that you had gone, my lord."

"I shall be better pleased if you call me Rodolphe."

"Well, pardon me, Mr. Rodolphe, for not coming to see you after the adventure with the Schoolmaster. I fear that I must have been guilty of great incivility: but you must not be angry with me."

"I freely forgive you," said Rodolphe, smiling. "Has Murph showed you this establishment?"

"Yes, Mr. Rodolphe. A very fine place; a nice habitation; nice stalls; and stables, all first rate. But I am going to be well off, Mr. Rodolphe. Mr. Murph will procure for me a situation, where I can earn four francs a day."

"I have a better proposition to make," said his lordship. "I tell you that this house, with its furniture, the shop, with its appurtenances, and a thousand crowns in this pocket-book, all belong to yourself."

Chourineur smiled in a confused manner, and flattened the new beaver which he held between his knees, with the air of one upon whose mind the very plain words which Rodolphe spoke, had made no impression whatever.

The latter continued: "I of course appreciate your surprise; but I repeat, the whole establishment, with the money, are at this moment your own property."

Chourineur turned red; he passed his indurated hand over his forehead, which was bathed in perspiration, and stammered out in a faltering voice, "Mine! mine! my prop—my property, Mr. Rodolphe?"

"Yes, your property. I have recorded the title in your name. I give it to you out and out. Do you not understand me?"

Chourineur twisted on his chair, scratched his head, coughed, cast down his eyes, and answered not a word. The thread of his ideas seemed broken. He heard distinctly what Rodolphe had said, but the words seemed to convey no conviction to his mind. Between the deep misery and degradation in which he had always lived, and the situation to which Rodolphe had elevated him, there was an abyss too wide, even for his fancy to cross. His lordship, not wishing to hasten the moment when the delightful certainty would burst upon the bewildered intellect of his protegé, said nothing; enjoying with rapture the trance in which Chourineur's senses were wrapt. With mingled emotions of joy and sorrow, he saw that there were a class of men, so habituated to want and suffering, that their reason refused to admit the possibility of an alleviated future. If, thought he, man has ever, Prometheus-like, stolen some rays of divinity, it is when he acts as the instrument of Providence in relieving the wo and wretchedness of the human race; when he demonstrates to the good, that there is a reward for virtue; and to the bad, that there is a penalty for crime. After having for some time enjoyed the astonishment of Chourineur, he said to him:

"What I have given you, seems to be greatly beyond your expectations!"

"My lord," said Chourineur, rising suddenly, "you propose to me this expensive establishment, and this immense sum of money, as a temptation; but I cannot——"

"Cannot what?"

Chourineur's face became animated. His timidity entirely vanished, as he said, in a firm tone of voice: "I cannot steal, my lord. And it is for that you offer me such a bribe. I never stole in my life; I never will. You would perhaps lure me to commit murder; but the dream of the sergeant is quite enough for one life."

"The miserable beings!" exclaimed Rodolphe: "Is generosity so rare, that they can only believe in its existence as a reward for crime!" Then addressing Chourineur, said to him in a mild tone, "you do me great wrong, my good friend. I require nothing from you, but what is virtuous and honorable. I endow you with this property, because you have deserved it."

"Me!" exclaimed Chourineur, with renewed astonishment. "Myself! how can I have merited it!"

"I will tell you," said Rodolphe. "Without any just appreciation of the distinction between virtue and vice, surrendered to your own lawless instincts, imprisoned for fifteen years within the walls of the bagnio in company with the most abandoned criminals, goaded by hunger and want, forced by your degradation and the proscription of all the honest, to associate with the vile alone; you have not only maintained your integrity, but your sorrow for your crime has survived the expiation which the laws of the realm have appointed."

This direct and touching language, was a new source of astonishment to Chourineur. He looked at Rodolphe with respect, mingled with awe and gratitude; but still, he could not believe in the reality of his good fortune. "How is it, Mr. Rodolphe?" said he; "because I told you my history between two glasses of wine, after you had flogged me, and I supposed you a laborer like myself, because you spoke our slang so well; and afterward, happened to save you from drowning—how is it, that you can give me such a munificent reward! What! a house for me! money for me! Chourineur a landlord! No, no, it cannot be!"

"Believing me to be a mechanic, like yourself, you told me your life, in a candid unaffected manner, without disguising what there was either culpable or meritorious in you. I have tested you thoroughly, and it pleases me to recompense you in this manner."

"But no, Mr. Rodolphe, that cannot be; for there are poor mechanics who have been all their lives honest, and have never been rewarded."

"I know it, and I would have done for those perhaps more than I have done for you. But if the man who lives honest in the midst of honest people, encouraged by their esteem, deserves our charity; he who, in spite of the contempt of the good, preserves his integrity, while surrounded by the greatest scoundrels on the face of the earth, deserves it a thousand fold more. Besides, this is not all: you have saved my own life; you have saved Murph's; and this gift is dictated by personal gratitude, as well as the desire of rescuing a being whose character is naturally good; one who has wandered, but is not lost. And this is not all——"

"What more have I done, Mr. Rodolphe!"

His lordship took the poor convict cordially by the hand: "Filled with compassion for the man who sought your life, you have offered him your assistance; you have even given him a refuge in your own poor abode, Notre Dame alley, No. 9."

"You know then where I live, Mr. Rodolphe?"

"Because you forgot the services which you rendered to me, do you suppose I forgot them myself? When you left my house you were followed, and you were seen going into No. 9, with the Schoolmaster."

"But Mr. Murph told me that you did not know where I lived."

"I wished to make a final trial of your character; I wished to ascertain whether you had the disinterestedness of generosity. After your important services to me, you faithfully returned to your daily labors; asking nothing, expecting nothing, and not uttering a word of reproach against my apparent ingratitude; and yesterday, when Mr. Murph proposed to you an occupation which paid better than your ordinary work, you seemed perfectly satisfied."

"As for that," said Chourineur, "five francs is always five francs; but as to the services I have rendered to you, I should return thanks for them, rather than receive a reward."

"How so!"

'Yes, yes, Mr. Rodolphe; since I have known you, and you told me that 'I had not lost my heart nor my honor,' it is strange how much I have reflected. It is astonishing what a change merely a few words may produce. Plant a few kernels of corn in the ground, and they will produce a large ear."

Rodolphe was struck with this just, almost poetical comparison. In fact, a few words, a few powerful and magical words to those who feel their force, had quickened the germ of generous instincts which was buried in this strong and energetic nature.

"You say, my lord," continued Chourineur, "that I have saved Mr. Rodolphe and Mr. Murph: but should I save a thousand, it would not bring *him* back."

And he hung down his head in sorrow.

"Remorse is salutary, but a good action never is lost."

"And then, what you told the Schoolmaster about murderers, applied as well to me as to him!"

Rodolphe, desirous of interrupting the train of Chourineur's observations, said to him: "Was it you who placed the Schoolmaster at Saint Mandé!"

"Yes, Mr. Rodolphe; he asked me to change his bills into gold, and I bought a belt for him, and placed his *quibus* in it and tied it round his body. He boards for thirty sous a day, with some good people there whom he assists a little."

"I wish you to do me one other favor, my good fellow!"

"Speak, Mr. Rodolphe."

"In a few days, I wish you to go and see him, taking this paper with you; it is a ticket for admission to the Hospital for the Infirm. By paying four thousand five hundred francs, and presenting this ticket, he will obtain a place there for life: it is all arranged. I have thought that this will be much better for him. He will be sure of bread and shelter for the rest of his life, and will have only to repent of his crimes. I only regret, that I did not procure him this life-interest at first, instead of giving him the money, which may be wasted or stolen: but he inspired me with such insufferable disgust and horror, that I wished to remove him from my presence as quick as possible. You can at least make the offer to him; if he refuses, we can act in some other way. Is it then settled that you will go!"

"I would do so with pleasure, Mr. Rodolphe, but I do not know whether I am at liberty. Mr. Murph has engaged me to an employer, who is to give me four francs a day."

Rodolphe looked at Chourineur with surprise, and said; "What is to become of your shop and house?"

"Come, come, Mr. Rodolphe, don't jibe a poor devil: you have amused yourself long enough to 'try me,' as you say. You and Mr. Murph must have said to yourselves, 'let us see if that animal of a Chourineur will be foolish enough to imagine—— but enough, enough: you are a gay one, Mr. Rodolphe."

"But have I not, this moment, explained it to you!"

"Oh yes; in order to give a coloring to the thing; and I confess that at first I was slightly caught."

"My good fellow, you must be deranged?"

"No, no, my lord; let us speak of what Mr. Murph proposed. Although four francs a day is very high wages for such a one as I am, I can conceive of *that*; but a house, and a shop, and a sum of money—what a farce! Thunder! what a farce!" and he burst out into a sincere and a hearty laugh.

"Once more I tell you——"

"Truly, my lord, speaking frankly, you did take me in a little at first: I said to myself, 'Mr. Rodolphe is a singular man; perhaps there is some bread to be sent to the *baker*,* and I am to be hired to do the errand:' but after I discovered that I was mistaken in you, I instantly perceived that it was all a farce. If I was such an ass as to believe that you would give a whole fortune to me for nothing, you might well say Chourineur is deranged."

Rodolphe was quite at a loss how to convince Chourineur. At length he said to him in an imposing, grave, and almost severe tone: "I never jest with the gratitude and affection that noble conduct inspires in me. I have told you that the house, the shop, and the money are yours; and, since you doubt my assertion, since you compel me to use a strong affirmation, I swear upon my honor that I have given them to you, and given them for the reasons which I have before assigned."

Chourineur could no longer doubt, after this firm and dignified asseveration. For some time he regarded Rodolphe in silence; at length he said in a faltering voice, "I believe you, my lord; I thank you sincerely; a poor man like myself, is little skilled in set speeches: once more I thank you from the bottom of my soul. All that I can say is, that I will never refuse to succor the poor. Hunger and misery are ogresses, like those who entrapped poor Goualeuse; and that once in the gutter, it is n't every one that has strength enough to get out."

"You could not thank me, my good fellow, in any better terms. You will find in the secretary, the title deeds of this property, purchased for you under the name of Mr. Francœur."

"Francœur?"

"Yes: you have no name, and I give this one to you. It is a good one: you will honor it, I am sure."

"My lord, I promise it to you."

"Only have courage, my good fellow, and you will aid me in a good and noble enterprise."

"I, my lord?"

"Yourself: in the eyes of the world, you will be a living and salutary example. The happy situation in which Providence has placed you, will prove that, however low a man may have fallen, he can yet rise; that no expectation is too great for him that repents and preserves pure in his bosom some salient quality. In seeing you happy, because, after a criminal action, expiated by a terrible punishment, you have continued honest, courageous, and disinterested; others, who have fallen also, will endeavor to emancipate themselves. Nothing of your past life should be concealed: sooner or later it will be known, and it is by all means best to anticipate such a revelation. We will soon go together to the mayor of this village. I have made inquiries about him, and find him in every respect a man worthy to concur in the work which I have undertaken. I will introduce myself, and will become security for you; and in order from this day to establish honorable relations between yourself and the two individuals who morally represent the society of this village, I will secure for two years the monthly sum of a thousand francs, to be distributed to the poor: each month I will send you that sum, the disposition of which shall be regulated by you, the mayor, and the curate. If any of them have the least scruple in being associated with you, it will disappear before the exigencies of charity. This intercourse once established, it will depend entirely upon yourself, whether you merit the approbation of these estimable persons; and I am sure you will not fail."

"My lord, I understand you. It is not only to me, Chourineur, to whom you do all this good: it is for the large class who, like myself, having found themselves in poverty, in trouble, and in crime, have come out, as you say, with a heart and with honor. With your leave, it is as in the army: when an entire battalion has made a desperate charge, every one cannot be decorated—there are only five crosses for five braves; but each of those who have not the cross, say to themselves, 'I will get it another time;' and at the next battle they charge more bravely than before."

Rodolphe listened to his protegé with pleasure. In restoring this man to his self-esteem, in elevating him in his own eyes, in giving to him, as we may say, a consciousness of his own worth, he had at the same time almost instantaneously devoloped observation, reflection, sentiment, honor, we had almost said delicacy.

"What you now say to me," said Rodolphe, "is another manner of proving your gratitude, and I esteem it accordingly."

"Very good, my lord: I should be very much embarrassed to prove it to you otherwise."

"Now let us pay a visit to your establishment. My old Murph has given himself that pleasure: I must have it also."

Rodolphe and Chourineur went down. When they entered the yard, the boy before alluded to, addressed Chourineur with respect: "I wish to tell you, Mr. Francœur, that the sale is excellent. The chops and the legs of mutton are all gone; and it will be necessary to slaughter one or two sheep immediately."

"Upon my word," said Rodolphe to Chourineur, "here is a fine opportunity for you to exercise your talents, and I wish to have the first cut: the ride has given me an appetite, and I must have a taste of your mutton chops."

"You are very kind, Mr. Rodolphe; you flatter me; I shall do my best," said Chourineur, in a joyous tone.

"Shall I lead two sheep to the slaughter-house?" said the boy.

"Yes; and bring me a well-sharpened knife, which is not too thin."

"I have what you want, master; one sharp enough to shave with," said the deputy.

"Thunder! Mr. Rodolphe," said Chourineur, taking off his coat with eagerness, rolling up his shirt-sleeves, and revealing his athletic arms—"Thunder! I thirst to be at him. Your knife, my boy. This is the one: I see you understand it: what a blade! With such a weapon, how I should like to attack a furious bull!" and Chourineur brandished the knife, while the blood was rushing to his eyes, and all his violent instincts were returning with tenfold ferocity.

The slaughter-house was in the yard—a sort of vaulted chamber, with stone troughs, and lighted from above. The boy led one of the sheep to the door. "Shall I pass him through the ring, master?"

"What! tie him up? no. Thunder! I'll take him between my knees, and hold him as in a vice. Give me the sheep, and go back to the shop."

The boy retired.

Rodolphe remained alone with Chourineur. He was watching him with attention, almost with anxiety. "Come, proceed," said he.

"I shall not be long. You will see that I know how to manage a knife; my hands burn, my ears are buzzing, my temples throb, as when everything used to look red. Come here little Madelon, let me stab you to death." And with eyes sparkling with wild joy, unmindful of Rodolphe's presence, he raised the sheep in his arms without an effort, and bore it hastily to the slaughter-house, with a sort of blood-thirsty and ferocious pleasure, like a wolf running to his den with his prey.

Rodolphe followed him and leaned against the door, which he closed. The slaughter-house was dark; a ray of light fell perpendicularly, in the manner of Rembrandt's painting, upon the rough form of Chourineur, bent, and holding in his teeth the long knife, which glittered in the dark. He placed the sheep between his knees, and when he had fixed it there, rapidly drew the knife across its throat. With a mild and plaintive bleat, it turned its dying eyes toward Chourineur, into whose face its blood had spouted. The blood, the bleat, the look, produced a most frightful impression upon the man. His knife fell from his powerless hands; his complexion became livid; his features were convulsed beneath the blood which covered them; his eyes started from their sockets; his hair stood on end; and moving back suddenly with horror, exclaimed in a stifled voice, "The sergeant! oh! the sergeant!"

Rodolphe rushed to him. "Be calm, be calm, my good fellow!"

"There! there! the sergeant!" repeated Chourineur, moving back, step by step, and pointing with his finger to some invisible phantom. Then uttering a terrible cry, as though tortured by the ghost of his victim, he rushed into the darkest corner of the slaughter-house; and throwing himself, face and breast and arms against the wall, as if he would prostrate the building, in order to escape the horrible vision, continued repeating in a sepulchral voice, "Oh! the sergeant! the sergeant! the sergeant!"

* Devil.

CHAPTER XXIV..... THE DEPARTURE.

After a long crisis, Murph and Rodolphe succeeded in calming the agitation of Chourineur. He was now seated alone with Rodolphe, in one of the rooms of the dwelling-house.

"My lord," said he, in a tone of great despondency, "you have

been very kind to me; but sincerely, I had rather be a thousand degrees more miserable than I have been, than to accept the occupation you have selected for me."

"Had you not better reflect upon it?"

"Look, my lord; you cannot conceive how I was affected, when I heard the cry of that unresisting beast, when its blood—its warm blood, like life itself—spouted into my face! Then I have seen that horrid dream again! the sergeant, and the poor young soldiers whom I stabbed, casting upon me their dying and compassionate eyes! Oh! it is enough to drive me mad!"

"Be calm, my dear friend, be calm."

"My lord, excuse me, but I feel the mania upon me now; I cannot bear the sight of blood, or the flash of a knife. Every instant they would revive that horrid dream, which was fading from my memory. What! to have daily my hands and feet in blood? daily to slaughter poor beasts that cannot resist? No! no! I cannot. I had rather be blind, like the Schoolmaster, than reduced to such a calling!"

It is impossible to describe the energy of accent, gesture and look, with which Chourineur expressed these thoughts.

His lordship was strongly moved—shocked—at the impression which the sight of blood had produced upon his companion. For a moment the savage instinct had subdued the man, but remorse soon triumphed over the thirst for blood. The lesson was touching, and full of warning. Rodolphe was not unprepared for the scene in the slaughter-house: he had dark forebodings of the effect of a return to his old pursuits upon Chourineur's mind, and had himself contrived the incident which had recalled such frightful recollections.

"Pardon me, my lord: I make but a poor return for your great kindness, but——"

"Far from it; you have answered all my expectations: but I confess I did not fully realize the exalted power of remorse."

"How, my lord?"

"Hear me. I selected for you the trade of butcher, because your taste and inclinations seemed to point in that direction."

"Alas! my lord, that is true; and were it not for a power which I cannot master, it would have made me happy: I said so to Mr. Murph this morning.

"I know it well, my poor Francœur—well named. Had you accepted this offer which I have made to you—and you could have done it without losing your self-esteem—all about these premises would have been yours. I should then have paid a sacred debt; I should have rescued you from a degrading occupation; I should have established in yourself a good and salutary example; and I should have always continued to interest myself in your welfare. If, on the contrary, the sight of blood innocently shed recalled to mind too powerfully your crime; if an involuntary repugnance to it proved to me, that remorse was still too active in the depths of your soul; the trade of butcher would be a daily torture to you, and I was prepared to offer you another occupation."

"Very true, Mr. Rodolphe; it would be a horrible torment."

"Now, this is the other proposition with which I had prepared myself. You will accept it, I doubt not; and I have acted throughout with that conviction. A person who owns a large property in Algeria, has offered for my acceptance—nothing remaining to be done except signing the deeds—a large tract of land, designed to be a grazing farm. The grounds depending are fertile, and in a state of high cultivation. I do not conceal from you, that knowing your courage, and the pleasure which you take in its exercise, I have conditionally purchased this property, although it is situated at the very foot of Atlas, and exposed to incessant attack from the Arabs. It will be necessary to be a husbandman and a soldier: your dwelling will be both a farm-house and a redoubt. The man who has charge of the property in the absence of the proprietor, will make you acquainted with everything respecting it. He is said to be honest and devoted, and you can retain his services as long as you shall find them necessary. Once there, you could not only increase your estate, by industry and intelligence, but render essential service to the country by means of your courage. The colonists have already formed themselves into a militia; and the extent of your property, and the number of tenants upon it, would place you in command of a considerable armed force, to be disciplined by your skill and inspirited by your courage. Your services would be extremely useful in protecting the property scattered over the plain. I repeat it, that I approve of this plan in spite of its danger, or rather, on account of its danger; because I wish to call into action your natural intrepidity; because, while expiating a great crime, your reformation will be more noble, more perfect, more heroic, if consummated amid the dangers of an unsubdued country, than in the peaceful pursuits of a small village. The reason why I did not offer this situation at first was, because it was more than probable that the other would prove satisfactory; and it is so adventurous, that I did not wish to expose you to it without an alternative. If this proposal does not suit you, tell me frankly: it is yet time to look for some other situation: if on the contrary you approve of it, to-morrow all the papers will be signed. I will place in your hands the title of your property; and you will go to Algeria, with an individual selected by the former proprietor of the farm, to put you in possession of it. Three years of arrearage rent will be due to you on your arrival. The income from the farm is now three thousand francs. Work—improve your land—be active—vigilant—and you will rapidly increase your own property, and that of the colonists who may need your assistance; for I have no doubt that you will always show yourself charitable and generous; always remembering, that whatever is distributed to the poor will return to you sevenfold. Although separated from you, I will not lose sight of you. I shall never forget, that both my best friend and myself owe to you our lives. The only proof of gratitude and attachment which I ask of you is, to learn to write and to read as soon as possible. Inform me regularly once a week of your condition and your prospects; and address me directly, if you need advice or assistance."

It is useless to describe the transports of Chourineur's joy. His character and disposition are already sufficiently known to the reader, to convince him that no proposition could have been more acceptable.

The next day, Chourineur actually departed for Algeria.

THE END OF PART FIRST.

PART THE SECOND.

CHAPTER I..... RESEARCHES.

THE house which Rodolphe owned in the alley of Veuves, was not his usual place of residence. He generally lived in one of the largest mansions of the faubourg Saint Germain, situated at the end of the rue Plumet. In order to escape the honors due to his sovereign rank, he had lived incognito since his arrival in Paris; his Chargé d'Affaires at the court of Saint Cloud having announced, that his master would pay the indispensable official visits under the name and title of Count de Duren. Thanks to a custom which prevails among the courts of the North, a prince may travel with as much freedom as pleasure, and escape from all the fatigue of ceremony. In spite of his transparent incognito, Rodolphe kept up, to suit his own convenience, a splendid establishment in the rue Plumet; to which we will now introduce the reader, on the morning of Chourineur's departure. Ten o'clock had but just struck. In the middle of a large room, on the lower floor, adjoining the study of Rodolphe, Murph was seated by a secretary, sealing various dispatches. An usher, dressed in black and wearing on his neck a silver chain, threw open the folding-doors of the ante-room, and announced "his excellency, the Baron de Graün."

Murph, without forsaking his occupation, saluted the visitor with a bow, at once cordial and familiar. "Mr. Chargé d'Affaires," said he, smiling, "warm yourself, and I will attend to you presently."

"Sir Walter Murph, private secretary to his most serene Highness, I await your orders," replied cheerfully, Baron de Graün; and he made, ironically, a low and respectful bow to the worthy squire.

The Baron was a man of fifty years of age; with his gray hair scrupulously curled and powdered, and with a projecting chin, half disappearing behind a high cravat of muslin, thoroughly starched, and of dazzling whiteness. His physiognomy was indicative of humor, his air distinguished, and under the glasses of his gold spectacles eyes of no ordinary cunning and penetration sparkled. Although it was but ten o'clock in the morning, M. de Graün wore a black coat—such was the etiquette due to the rank of his master—with a striped and variegated ribbon tied in its button-hole; he deposited his hat upon a chair, while Murph continued his occupation.

"His Highness must undoubtedly have set up a large part of the night, my dear Murph," said the Baron; "your correspondence seems to be very voluminous."

"My lord retired at six o'clock this morning. He wrote,

among others, a letter of eight pages, to the Grand Marshal; and he dictated to me one of nearly the same length, to the chief of the Supreme Council."

"Shall I wait for his Highness to rise, to impart to him in person the information which I bring?"

"No, my dear Baron, he has given orders not to be disturbed until two or three o'clock. He desires you, this morning, to forward these dispatches by special courier, instead of waiting till Monday. He gave orders that you should confide to me the information which you have gathered, and I will communicate it to his Highness."

"Very well: his Highness will be much pleased, I presume, with what I have to tell him. But, my dear Murph, I hope the sending of this special courier is not a bad augury; for the last dispatches I delivered to his Highness——"

"Announced that everything went on well there; and it is precisely because my lord wishes to express his satisfaction to the Supreme Council, and to the Grand Marshal, that he wishes you to dispatch the courier to-day."

"That is just like his Highness; if it were a reprimand, he would not be in such haste to forward it: moreover, there can be nothing but good said of this firm and able *pro tempore* administration of our government. It is quite a simple concern," continued he, smiling; "the time-piece itself is excellent, and was so perfectly regulated by our master, that nothing remained to be done but wind it up punctually; so that it may point out daily, the employment of each hour, and of every individual: and as order in the government always produces confidence and tranquillity among the people, I have a sufficient explanation of the good news which you have communicated."

"Is there nothing new in Paris, my dear Baron? No reports in circulation of our mysterious adventures?"

"The whole world are completely mystified. Since the arrival of my lord in Paris, the few persons who have been presented to him have accustomed themselves to see him very rarely. It is believed that he is very fond of solitude, and that he makes frequent excursions to the environs of Paris. His Highness has, very wisely in my opinion, got rid of his chamberlain and the aid-de-camp which he brought with him from Germany."

"Yes: their surveillance would have been very troublesome."

"So, excepting the Countess Sarah McGregor, her brother Tom Seyton, of Halsbury, and their attendant Karl, (confound the entire troop!) no one is informed of his Highness's disguises; and not one of them, certainly, has any interest in betraying the secret."

"My dear Baron," said Murph, sighing, "what a misfortune it is, that this cursed Countess is a widow now."

"Did she not marry in 1827 or '8?"

"In 1827, a short time after the death of the unfortunate little girl, who would be now sixteen or seventeen years of age; and for whom my lord daily weeps, but without ever mentioning her name."

"His regrets are the more natural, as his Highness had no children by his marriage."

"I have imagined, my dear Baron, that in addition to the compassion which Goualeuse inspires, the interest which his Highness manifests for her is in some measure attributable to the circumstance, that the poor girl, whom he regrets, (although he despises the Countess, her mother) would now be of the same age with Fleur de Marie."

"It seems to me to be a sort of fatality, that this Countess Sarah, from whom I thought that we were for ever delivered, should find herself a widow precisely eighteen months after his Highness has lost his own excellent spouse. I am certain that the Countess believes herself favored by fate, by this double widowhood."

"Yes; and her rash hopes have become more sanguine than ever, although she knows that his Highness has for her a most decided and deserved aversion. Was she not the cause of ——?" said Murph, leaving the sentence incomplete: "this woman is our evil genius. May God grant that she does not bring with her any new misfortune."

"What can be feared from her, my dear Murph? Formerly, she exercised over my lord the influence which a skilful and intriguing woman can always exert over a youth, who loves for the first time; and particularly over one in the peculiar situation his Highness then was, all of which you know. But that charm has been completely broken by the discovery of her unworthy manœuvres; and especially, by the recollection of the awful calamity of which she was the cause."

"Speak in a lower tone, my dear de Graün," said Murph. "Alas! we are approaching the sinister month, and no less sinister day of it—'THIRTEENTH OF JANUARY.' I have great fears for my lord on that terrible anniversary."

"Yet, if a great fault can be pardoned by expiation, his Highness must be absolved."

"I beg of you, de Graün, let us speak no more of this: I shall be sad for the entire day."

"I was telling you, that at the present time, the expectations of the Countess are entirely deceitful and absurd. The death of the poor girl, just mentioned, broke the last tie which had power to attach my lord to that woman: she must be mad, still to persist."

"Yes, but it is dangerous madness; her brother, you know, shares her ambitious views, and her obstinate fancies; although this worthy couple have as much reason for despair *now*, as they had eighteen years ago for hope."

"How much trouble that infernal Abbé Polidori caused in those times by his criminal condescension!"

"By the way, speaking of that wretch, I am told that he was seen here two years since, doubtless plunged in deep poverty, or plotting some dark machination."

"What a fate for a man of so much learning, wit, and intelligence!"

"But also of abominable perversity! Heaven grant that he may not meet with the Countess; an alliance between two such evil-minded persons would be very dangerous."

"Once more, my dear Murph, I assure you that the interest which the Countess feels for my lord, will always prevent her from contriving any wicked action, by taking advantage of his adventurous disposition."

"I have the same hopes; and yet no longer than a month ago, chance only prevented the execution of some detestable plan—I know not what—which she had contrived with the Schoolmaster; that frightful villain, who, thank Heaven! is now unable to injure any one; and living (I hope repentant,) with some poor but honest peasantry, in the village of Saint Mandé. Alas! I fear that it was to avenge me that my lord exposed himself to a conflict with the civil power, by inflicting summary punishment on the scoundrel."

"I have no apprehensions on that score, my dear Murph. The question is simply this: an escaped galley-slave, a convicted murderer, feloniously introduces himself into your house, and strikes you with a dagger; you may kill him, by the right of self-defence, or send him to the scaffold; in both cases, the wretch dies. Now suppose, instead of killing him yourself, or delivering him over to the executioner, you inflict upon him a severe and well-merited punishment, and thus place the monster in a condition no longer to injure society. Who would complain? Could a civil action be sustained in favor of an outlaw? Would you be condemned for having gone less far than the law itself allowed: merely depriving of sight a man whom you could legally put to death? If, in order to defend my own life, or avenge a flagrant adultery, society gives me the right of life or death over my fellow-men—a formidable right, without appeal, in which I am myself constituted both judge and executioner—can I not lessen or modify, as I please, the capital punishment, which I can inflict with impunity, and especially toward a wretch whose life is thrice forfeited, like the villain in question? I leave out of the argument, our position as Sovereign Prince of the German Confederation. I know, in ordinary construction of law, this fact would be of no avail; but, in the practical execution of it, it must always be a forced exception. Besides, suppose that such a case should actually be brought against my lord; how many generous acts—what alms, and what benefits he could plead in extenuation. In the condition in which the facts now are, suppose this anomalous cause should be brought before a tribunal, what do you think would be the result?"*

"My lord has always told me, that in his pleadings he would take no benefit of the privileges to which his rank entitles him. But who could be produced as witnesses of the fact? You know the inflexible discretion of David, and of the four Hungarian menials in the house of the alley of Veuves. Chourineur also, who is under such obligations to my lord, has not whispered a word of it, through fear of being compromised. Before his departure for Algeria, he swore secrecy upon that point. As for the brigand himself, he knows that to complain, would be carrying his own head to the scaffold."

"In short, as neither you nor I are persons to mention it, the secret, although known to many, is perfectly secure. If it comes to the worst, only vexation is to be apprehended: and yet, so many acts of noble and disinterested benevolence would be developed in the course of the inquiry, that the accusation would be a triumph for his Highness."

"You reassure me, completely: but you bring me, you said,

* It seems to the translator, that the Baron makes out but a feeble case in *legal* defence of his Highness. He was perfectly secure, however, in the Schoolmaster's fears, who never would have dared to present himself before the public authorities.

the information obtained from the letters found in possession of the Schoolmaster, as well as the declarations made by Chouette during her stay in the hospital."

"Here are the memorandums," said the Baron, taking some papers from his pocket. "They relate to researches made about the birth of the young girl called Goualeuse, and inquiries about the residence of François Germain, son of the Schoolmaster."

"Will you read these notes for me, my dear de Graün? I am possessed of his Highness's intentions, and I will see whether the information you convey, will suffice. Are you still pleased with your agent?"

"Yes: he is an admirable man, full of intelligence, skill and discretion. I am obliged at times to moderate his zeal. His Highness, you know, reserves for himself certain *eclaircissements*."

"He is still ignorant, then, of the part my lord plays in all this?"

"Absolutely: my diplomatic position is an excellent pretext for the investigations with which I charge him. Mr. Badinot has many deputies, and a direct or indirect intercourse with every class of society. Formerly an attorney, but obliged to give up his business on account of some serious abuse of professional confidence; he has, nevertheless, preserved very exact knowledge of the fortune and situation of his former clients. He is acquainted with many secrets with which he daringly boasts that he has trafficked. Enriched and impoverished several times by his business, too well known to attempt new speculations, reduced to the necessity of living, from day to day, by illicit and underhand means; he is a sort of ubiquitous Figaro, anxious to see and hear everything. He is a slave, body and soul, to the man who pays him, and he can have no possible interest to deceive: I, however, have him watched unknown to himself. We have therefore no reason to distrust the information which he gives."

"What he has already told us, has been found to be very correct."

"He is as honest as such a character can be: he is a type of a large class of quite original and mysterious beings, who can be found in Paris, and nowhere else. He would amuse his Highness much, were it not improper to have him presented."

"Do you think it necessary to have Mr. Badinot's pay increased?"

"Five hundred francs a month, with perquisites, appears to me to be quite sufficient: he is now contented; we can think hereafter of the propriety of increasing it."

"Is he not ashamed of his employment?"

"Ashamed! he is proud of it: he never fails to assume an important and diplomatic air when he conveys any information to me; for the rogue pretends to believe that it is an affair which concerns the State. It must puzzle him to discover the occult relations between interests so varied, and the destiny of empires! Indeed, he has sometimes the impudence to say to me, 'How many complications, unknown to the vulgar, exist in the government of a realm? Who would suppose, Baron, that the notes I give you, have their influence on the affairs of Europe?'"

"Rogues always endeavor to throw an illusion over their baseness. But these notes, my dear Baron——"

"Here they are all together: the digest is from the information conveyed by Mr. Badinot."

"I listen to you."

M. de Graün, read as follows:

NOTE RELATING TO FLEUR DE MARIE.

Toward the beginning of the year 1827, a man by the name of Pierre Tournemine, now detained in the galleys at Rochefort, for forgery, proposed to the woman Gervais, otherwise Chouette, to take charge for ever of a little girl five or six years old, and to receive the sum of a thousand francs, paid down——

"Alas! my dear Baron," said Mr. Murph, interrupting him: '1827!' it is precisely the year when my lord heard of the death of the unfortunate child, whose loss he deplores. That year was a fatal one to our master."

"Happy years are rare, my poor Murph; but let us proceed." The bargain being closed, the child remained with the woman during two years: at the end of which, wishing to escape from the ill treatment she received, the little girl ran away. The woman Gervais heard nothing of her for many years, until she saw her again in a *cabaret* of the Cité, about six weeks since. The child having grown up to be a young woman, was then called Goualeuse. A few days before this last meeting, the aforesaid Tournemine had sent to Bras-rouge (a habitual correspondent of galley slaves, whether detained or discharged,) a letter concerning the child, confided to the care of the woman Gervais, otherwise Chouette. From that letter, and the declaration of the woman Gervais, it appears that a Madam Seraphin, governess in the house of a notary, called Jacques Ferrand, had, in 1827, asked the said Tournemine to find for her a woman who, for the sum of a thousand francs, would consent to take charge of a child five or six years old, whom it was wished to abandon, as stated above. The object of Tournemine in communicating this information to Bras-rouge was, to enable him to exact one-third of the above sum from Madam Seraphin, by threatening to make known this adventure, long since forgotten. Tournemine affirmed, that Madam Seraphin acted as the agent of some person or persons, to him unknown. Bras-rouge had confided the letter to Chouette, the partner of the Schoolmaster's crimes; which explains why she was able to say to Goualeuse at the tavern of the White Rabbit, in order to torture her, 'your parents have been discovered, but you shall not know them.'

"The question is, whether the information in Tournemine's letter is correct."

Inquiries have been made about the aforementioned Madam Seraphin, and the notary called Jacques Ferrand. Both are living. Jacques Ferraud resides rue de Sentier, No. 41: he passes for an austere and pious man; at least, he frequently attends church. In the practice of his profession, he has an excessive exactness, which people tax as harshness: he lives with a parsimony which nearly approaches to avarice. Madam Seraphin is still his governess. Mr. Jacques Ferrand, who was regarded as quite poor, purchased his commission for the sum of 350,000 francs. These funds came into his possession by means of securities, endorsed by M. Charles Robert, a superior officer of the staff of the National Guard of Paris; a very handsome young man, and very fashionable in a certain class. He divides with the notary the income of his practice, which is said to amount to 50,000 francs a-year, and has nothing to do with the business, of course. Some slanderers affirm, that in consequence of some lucky speculations in stocks, undertaken in concert with M. Charles Robert, the notary could now refund the sum paid for his commission. But the reputation of M. Jacques Ferrand is so well established, that these reports are generally regarded as calumnies. It is, however, certain, that Madam Seraphin, the governess of the holy man, will be able to make important disclosures respecting the birth of Goualeuse.

"Truly wonderful ingenuity, my dear Baron," said Murph. "It does appear that there is some truth in the declaration of Tournemine. Perhaps we shall discover, by means of the notary, the parents of the unfortunate girl. Now, have you as good information concerning the Schoolmaster's offspring?"

"Not as precise, perhaps, but quite as satisfactory."

"Your Mr. Badinot is a perfect treasure."

"You will see, that this Bras-rouge is a main-spring in nearly every wicked machination. Mr. Badinot must necessarily have some intercourse with the police; and he some time since pointed out this Red-arm as the intermediary of several galley slaves, about the period that my lord took the first steps to discover the son of Madam George Duresnel, the unfortunate wife of the Schoolmaster."

"Undoubtedly. It was while searching for Bras-rouge, in his den at rue Fevès, No. 43, that my lord met with Chourineur and Fleur de Marie. His Highness seemed absolutely eager to embrace that opportunity, in order to visit those awful haunts, thinking that he might possibly find some miserable beings whom he could rescue from their pollution. His presentiments did not deceive him, although the voyage of discovery was attended with many dangers."

"You shared bravely those dangers, my dear Murph."

"Am I not his Highness's coal-heaver!" said the latter, smiling.

"Say, rather, intrepid body-guard, my worthy friend. But to speak of your courage and devotion, is a sort of vain repetition; therefore I will proceed with my report. Here is the note concerning François Germain, the son of Madam George and the Schoolmaster, alias Duresnel."

CHAPTER II. ..... REPORT CONCERNING FRANÇOIS GERMAIN.

BARON DE GRAUN read from the manuscript:

About eighteen months ago, a young man, by the name of François Germain, arrived in Paris from Nantes, where he had been employed in the banking-house of Noel & Co. It appears from the confession of the Schoolmaster, and from letters found in his possession, that the man to whom he had intrusted the

perversion of his son, that he might afterward be employed as an agent for the criminals, solicited his aid in attempts to commit a forgery upon the house of Noel & Co., where François Germain was employed. This last-mentioned individual rejected the proposal with indignation. Not wishing, however, to denounce the man who had educated him, he wrote an anonymous letter to Noel & Co., informing them of the conspiracy against them; and then fled from Nantes, in order to escape from the men who would convert him into an instrument of crime. The wretches, learning the departure of Germain, came to Paris, had an interview with Bras-rouge, and instituted a search for the said Germain, undoubtedly with some criminal intent against him. After long and patient inquiries, they succeeded in finding out his residence; but the information came too late for their purposes, for Germain, having a few days before met with the man who had endeavored to entice him into crime, suddenly changed his place of abode, conjecturing the motive which had drawn him to Paris; and in this manner the son of the Schoolmaster escaped from his persecutors. About six months ago, however, the wretches succeeded in discovering that Germain resided in rue de Temple, No. 17. While returning home one evening, he nearly became the victim of an ambush. ("This circumstance was concealed from his Highness by the Schoolmaster," said the Baron, parenthetically.) Germain suspected whence the blow came, and left the rue Temple; and his present residence is unknown. This is the substance of the information possessed by the Schoolmaster, at the time he was punished.

"From this point our researches have continued, by the order of my lord. Here is the result:"

François Germain lived about three months at the house No. 17 rue de Temple. The character of the house is somewhat singular, on account of the eccentric manners and strange occupations of the inmates. Germain was much loved, on account of his cheerful and obliging disposition. Although he appeared to live on a very moderate income, he lavished the most touching care and attention upon a poor family who occupied the garret of the house. Inquiries have been made in vain at the house in the rue Temple, about the new residence and present occupation of François Germain. It was supposed that he was employed in some mercantile establishment; for he left early in the morning, and returned about ten o'clock at night. The only person who knows positively where the young man now resides, is a female inmate of the house No. 17 rue Temple. This young woman, who appeared to be intimately acquainted with Germain, is a very pretty grisette* by the name of Rigolette. She has the room adjoining that which was occupied by Germain. This room, being vacated by the departure of the young man, is now 'to let.' It was under the pretext of hiring this room, that the present information was obtained.

"Rigolette!" said Murph suddenly, who seemed to have been reflecting; "Rigolette! it seems to me I am familiar with that name."

"How, Sir Walter Murph!" said the Baron, laughing; "how! most worthy and respectable father of a family, are you acquainted with grisettes? The name of Mademoiselle Rigolette familiar to you? Fie! fie!"

"Upon my word, my lord has given me opportunities of making so many strange acquaintances, that you should not be astonished by my familiarity with a grisette. But wait a moment—I remember it perfectly now: my lord, in relating to me the history of Goualeuse, could not avoid laughing at the grotesque name of Rigolette. So much I remember: she was a prison friend of poor Fleur de Marie."

"Well, well! this same laughable Rigolette may be of great service to us in this emergency. My report is closed. Would it not be serviceable to hire the vacant room in rue Temple? We have no orders to make further investigations; but from some words dropped by the door-keeper, we are induced to believe, that not only we could learn in that house positive information concerning the son of the Schoolmaster, through the assistance of Mademoiselle Rigolette; but my lord would also have the means of observing the manners, occupations, and misery of some of the inmates."

CHAPTER III..... THE MARQUIS D'HARVILLE.

"You see, my dear Murph," said M. de Graün, after finishing the report; "you see, from our information, that we must go to this notary Jacques Ferrand, to find the parents of Fleur de Marie; and to Mademoiselle Rigolette, to ascertain the present residence of François Germain. It is something accomplished, to know to whom we must apply."

* Grisette is a name given in Paris to seamstresses, milliners, and shop girls.

"Certainly, Baron. Besides, my lord will find a rich field for observation in the house alluded to; but this is not all. Have you made any inquiries respecting the Marquis d'Harville?"

"Yes; and as far as his pecuniary affairs are concerned, the suspicions of his Highness have no foundation. Mr. Badinot affirms, and I believe him well informed, that the Marquis's fortune was never more solid, never more wisely administered. After having sought, in vain, for the cause of the deep grief which overwhelmed the Marquis, his Highness concluded that financial embarrassment might be the cause of it; in which case he had intended to place his own purse at his disposition, with the delicacy which always characterizes my lord. But since he is mistaken in this conjecture, I know not what solution will expound the enigmatical grief of the Marquis; and his lordship will have to give it up, although he is warmly attached to M. d'Harville."

"Quite natural. His Highness never will forget the debt of obligation which his father owes the Marquis. Do you know, my dear Murph, that in 1815, at the time the states of the German Confederation were restored to their sovereignty, the father of his Highness was in great danger of elimination, on account of his well-known and proved devotion to Napoleon? The late Marquis d'Harville rendered, on that occasion, the most eminent services to the father of our prince. Thanks to the friendship with which the Emperor Alexander honored the Marquis—a friendship which dated from the period of his emigration to Russia—he was enabled to invoke an influence, which was almost paramount, in the Congress which decided the fate of the princes of the Germanic league."

"Observe, Baron, how noble actions link themselves together in a chain of reciprocal obligations. In '92, the father of the present Marquis is proscribed. He finds in Germany, at the court of my lord's sire, the most generous hospitality. After a sojourn there of three years, he starts for Russia, wins the favor of the Czar, and, in his turn, reflects that favor upon the prince, who had so cordially welcomed him a few years before."

"Was it not in 1815, during the visit of the old Marquis d'Harville to the Grand Duke, that the friendship of my lord and the young Marquis commenced?"

"Yes; and they still retain the most pleasant reminiscences of that happy period of their youth. But this is not all. My lord feels such a debt of gratitude to the memory of the man whose friendship was of so much service to his father, that all those who belong to the family d'Harville participate in his good-will; so that it is no less to her misfortunes and virtues, than to her relationship with that family, that Madam George owes the continued kindness of his Highness."

"Madam George, the wife of Duresnel the convict, called the Schoolmaster?" exclaimed the Baron.

"Yes; the mother of this François Germain, we are attempting to find."

"She a relative of the Marquis d'Harville?"

"She was the cousin and intimate friend of his mother. The old Marquis entertained for Madam George the most devoted friendship."

"But how could the family d'Harville permit her to marry such a reprobate as Duresnel?"

"The father of that unhappy woman, M. de Lagny, intendant of Languedoc, before the revolution was a man of very extensive property, and fortunately escaped proscription. In the calm which succeeded that terrible epoch, his thoughts dwelt upon the marriage of his daughter. Duresnel presented himself; he belonged to an excellent parliamentary family; he was rich, and concealed his perverse inclinations under hypocritical pretensions, and succeeded in gaining the hand of Mademoiselle de Lagny. After a short period of dissimulation, the vices of the man revealed themselves. He became a spendthrift, a gambler, and an intimate associate with the vile; and plunged his wife, of course, in the deepest affliction. Her pride of character would not suffer her to complain; she buried her sorrows in her own bosom; and after her father's death retired to one of her estates, which she cultivated herself, for the purpose of diverting her mind. The husband soon dissipated their common property by gaming and extravagances, and the farm to which the wife had retired was sold. Taking with her her son, she then went to reside with the Marchioness d'Harville, whom she loved as a sister. Duresnel, having squandered his own property and his wife's patrimony, found himself reduced to expedients: he took to crime as a resource; became a forger, thief, murderer, and was condemned to the galleys; and he took his son from the mother in order to educate him in crime. You know the sequel."

"But how did my lord discover Madam Duresnel?"

"When the husband was sent to Rochefort, the wife, reduced to extreme poverty, assumed the name of Madam George."

"In that desolate situation, why did she not apply to the Marchioness, her relative and friend?"

"She had died before the sentence of Duresnel; and from that time, through an invincible pride, Madam George would make no application to her relatives, who would have certainly cherished for her all the regard which such calamities deserved. But, when disabled by sickness, she had come to the resolution of unploring the aid of the present Marquis d'Harville, the son of her friend; and it was thus that his Highness met her."

"In what manner?"

"One day my lord was going to visit M. d'Harville. He observed a few steps before him, a poor, miserably dressed female, pale and downcast with suffering, approaching the mansion of M. d'Harville. She arrived at the gate, and was going to ring after a long hesitation, when her courage seemed to fail her, and she retired. My lord, quite astonished, followed the woman, much interested in her delicacy and her suffering. She finally entered a miserable looking tenement. He instituted a few inquiries about her, with a highly satisfactory result. She was in the habit of laboring for her livelihood; but both health and work failing her, she was reduced to the most extreme destitution. The next day I went with my lord to visit her. We arrived just in season to rescue her from death by starvation. After a long sickness, during which every attention was lavished upon her, Madam George, through gratitude, related to my lord (of whose rank she is still ignorant,) her misfortunes, her true name, the sentence of Duresnel, and the abduction of her son."

"And it was thus that his Highness learned the connection of Madam George with the d'Harville family?"

"Yes; and after the disclosure, my lord, who admired the excellent qualities of Madam George, removed her from Paris to his farm at Bogueval, where she now is with Fleur de Marie. She finds in that peaceful retreat, if not happiness, at least tranquillity; and seeks, in overseeing the farm, diversion of mind from her afflictions. As much to spare the painful susceptibility of Madam George, as to avoid making public his charities, his Highness has concealed from M. d'Harville the relief which has been extended to his relative."

"I now fully understand the double motive which my lord has for discovering her son."

"You now can judge, my dear Baron, of the great interest my lord must feel for the d'Harville family; and how much the melancholy of the young Marquis, who has so many reasons to be happy, must affect him."

"What can M. d'Harville want, which he does not possess? He has everything that is enviable: birth, fortune, wit, youth, and a wife, to whose charms all the virtues and all the graces have contributed."

"That is very true. My lord only resorted to our agent, after having himself tried in vain to penetrate the cause of M. d'Harville's grief. The Marquis is much moved by the kindness of his Highness, but is very reserved on the subject of his melancholy. It may be some sorrow of the heart."

"They say that he is warmly attached to his wife, and she gives him no cause for uneasiness. I meet with her frequently in the fashionable world: she is followed by a train of admirers, as every young, gay and charming woman invariably is, in Paris; but not one word has ever been breathed against her reputation."

"Yes; I understand that the Marquis speaks in the highest terms of his wife. I believe the only difference of opinion which they have ever had, is respecting the character of the Countess Sarah McGregor."

"The Marchioness is acquainted with her, then?"

"By the most unlucky chance in the world, the late Marquis d'Harville, seventeen or eighteen years ago, became acquainted with Sarah Seyton, of Halsbury, and her brother Tom, when they resided in Paris, and were patronized by the English embassadress. When they started for Germany, the old Marquis favored them with letters of introduction to the father of my lord, with whom he was in constant correspondence. Alas! my dear de Graün, our misfortunes perhaps never would have happened, without this ill-fated intervention, and an acquaintance with that woman never formed by my lord. In fine, when quite recently, the Countess returned to Paris, she solicited an introduction to the d'Harvilles, aware of the intimacy which existed between them and his Highness; for her perseverance in seeking an interview, is as obstinate as his determination to avoid one. But to return to the Marchioness: her husband, to whom my lord has very plainly expressed his opinions respecting the Countess, advised his wife to avoid her society; but she, pleased with the artful and hypocritical flatteries of the Countess, did not receive the advice with much gratitude; and some trifling dispute arose, which certainly could not be a sufficient cause for the deep-seated melancholy of the Marquis."

"I am truly sorry, my dear Murph, that Madam d'Harville has formed any acquaintance with the Countess. The pretty and innocent little Marchioness, cannot gain anything by an intercourse with this diabolical woman."

"Speaking of diabolical creatures, here is a dispatch respecting Cecile, the unworthy wife of our excellent David."

"Between you and I, my dear Murph, it is my opinion that this audacious *metisse** deserves a punishment equal in severity with that which was inflicted by the agency of her black lord upon the Schoolmaster. She also has caused blood to be shed, and her corruption is frightful."

"And with it all, her person is so beautiful and bewitching—a perverted soul under a graceful exterior. The head of death in a casket of gold, is always to me doubly revolting."

"The depravity of Cecile's soul stands out certainly in strong relief; but I hope that the present dispatch will annul the last orders of my lord respecting her."

"Far from it, Baron."

"Does my lord, then, still wish to assist her in escaping from the fortress where she has been confined for life?"

"Yes."

"And that her abductor should bring her to France? to Paris?"

"Yes; and what is more, this dispatch gives orders to hasten the escape of Cecile as much as possible; so that by travelling rapidly, she may arrive here within a fortnight."

"I am lost in surprise! My lord has always manifested the greatest horror of this woman."

"And he now holds her in deeper detestation than he ever did before."

"And yet he recalls her here! However, it will always be in the power of his Highness to secure the extradition of Cecile, if she does not fulfil the expectations which he has in releasing her. The son of the keeper of the fortress of Gerolstein, if I understand the stratagem aright, is ordered to abduct her under the pretence of love; and all possible facilities are to be given to him, to enable him to accomplish the project. Rejoiced with the opportunity of escape, the metisse will follow her abductor to Paris. She will still be under her sentence: she will be merely an escaped convict; and I can demand her surrender from the authorities of France whenever it pleases his Highness to require it."

"He who lives will see the result, my dear de Graün. I also beg of you, by his Highness's order, to write to our chancellor, for an authenticated copy of the marriage-certificate of David and Cecile. The ceremony was performed in the ducal palace, as David is an officer to the house of his Highness."

"By sending by to-day's courier, we can obtain the certificate within a week."

"David was petrified with astonishment, when he learnt from my lord the expected arrival of Cecile. 'I hope your Highness will not compel me to see the monster,' said he. 'Be calm,' my lord replied; 'you shall not see her, but I need her here for certain purposes.' David was relieved from a great weight of anxiety. I am sure that the most painful recollections were revived."

"Poor negro! He may love her yet, for she is said to be as beautiful as ever."

"She is certainly charming. The merciless eye of a creole, which can discern mixture of blood in the almost imperceptible luster tinge of the finger-nails, is necessary in order to detect her origin. Our fair northern beauties have not a more transparent complexion, a whiter skin, or more straight and glossy hair."

"I was in France when my lord returned from America, and brought with him David and Cecile. I know that the excellent physician is attached to his Highness by the most lively gratitude; but I never knew by what chain of adventures he was drawn into his relation with our master, nor how he came to marry Cecile. I saw her, for the first time, about a year after her marriage; and Heaven knows the scandal which she had already caused."

"I can gratify your curiosity, my dear Baron. I accompanied my lord in his travels on the American continent, and I was present when he snatched David and the *metisse* from the dreadful fate which awaited them."

"You are very kind, my dear Murph: I am listening," said the Baron."

* A *metisse* is the issue of a white and a quadroon. The metisse can scarcely be distinguished from those of pure Caucasian descent.

CHAPTER IV..... HISTORY OF DAVID AND CECILE.

"Mr. Willis," said Murph, "a wealthy American planter, residing in Florida, discovered in one of his young slaves named David, who was attached to the infirmary of the plantation, remarkable intelligence—great compassion for the sick intrusted to his care, to whom he administered the prescriptions of the physician—and such a strong partiality for botanical *materia medica*, that without any instruction, he had collected all the plants on the plantation and its environs into a herbarium, and classified them with great correctness. The property of Mr. Willis was situated on the sea-shore, some fifteen or twenty leagues from the nearest village. The physicians in that part of the country were very ignorant of their profession, and their services, such as they were, procured with great difficulty, owing to the secluded situation of his plantation, and the miserable condition of the roads. Desirous of removing this annoyance, peculiarly grievous in a country subject to epidemics, and wishing to have constantly by him an able practitioner, the planter determined to send young David to France, that he might perfect himself in medicine and surgery. Enchanted with the offer, the young negro departed for Paris; his master paid all the expences of an eight-years' sojourn; and David, after the most unwearied application, received with great distinction, the degree of doctor of medicine; and returned to place his learning at the disposition of his master."

"But David was in fact emancipated, by placing his feet on the soil of France."

"Certainly: but he was a man of singular loyalty. He had promised Mr. Willis to return, and he did not consider as belonging to himself, knowledge which had been acquired by his master's money: and he was also influenced by the hope of morally and physically relieving the sufferings of the slaves, his old companions. He promised to himself to be not only their physician, but their support, their defender, against the violence of the planter."

"He must have been endowed with a rare probity, to return to a state of slavery after a residence of eight years in Paris, among the most democratic youth of Europe."

"By that feature of his character you must judge the man. He returned then to Florida, and it must be admitted that he was treated by Mr. Willis with some consideration and kindness: eating at his own table and lodging under his own roof. Yet the planter was cruel, stupid, sensual and despotic, beyond even other Creoles; and he flattered himself that he was the most generous of mankind, by allowing David a salary of six hundred francs. Within a few months, a most distressiug typhus fever broke out upon the plantation. Mr. Willis was himself attacked among the first, but was soon relieved by the excellent care of David: and of thirty negroes who were visited with the disease, only two died. Mr. Willis was so highly gratified with David's services, that he increased his remuneration to twelve hundred francs per annum; and the negro physician found himself one of the happiest men in the world: his brethren regarded him as their saviour. With much difficulty, he obtained from their master some melioration of their condition: he hoped to benefit them more in future. In the meanwhile, he instructed and consoled them; he exhorted them to bear their fate with resignation; he spoke of a God, who looked upon whites and blacks with an indiscriminatiug eye: of another world, where master and slave would both be merged in the sole distinction which prevailed there: that between the righteous and the wicked: of an eternal life, where one man is not the chattel, the beast of burden, to another man; but where those who are now victims, were so supremely blessed as to pray for their tormentors here. What shall I say? These degraded beings, who, contrary to the lot of ordinary mortality, count with rapture each day which hastens them to the grave; to these miserable outcasts, whose only companion is despair, David revealed the hope of an immortal freedom. Their chains grew lighter; their toil less painful; the physician was their idol. A year had now passed in this manner. Cecile, a metisse, was conspicuous as the prettiest slave on the plantation. Mr. Willis assumed the prerogative of the sultan over his seraglio, and cast a condescending glance upon the young girl. For the first time in his life, his despotic advances met with a decided rebuff, with impregnable virtue. Cecile loved—she loved David, who, during the late epidemic, had saved her life by his unremitting care; and with love most pure she repaid the debt of gratitude. David had too refined a taste to reveal his happiness, until he was able to make Cecile his wife; he determined to wait until she was sixteen years of age. Mr. Willis, ignorant of this mutual affection, kindly indicated his supreme will to the pretty metisse. Cecile, in tears, flew to David to relate the insult to which she had been exposed. The black consoled her grief, and went instantly to his master to ask her hand in marriage.

"The devil! my dear Murph; I can imagine the reply of the republican sultan: he refused of course?"

"He did refuse: he said 'he had himself a passion for the girl, and was not prepared to submit to the disdain of a slave: that there were on the plantation a dozen metisses as pretty as Cecile, and that David must select another wife!' David plead his long affection and Cecile's love. The planter sneered; David protested, but in vain. The Creole said 'that it would be disgraceful to be supplanted by his slave.' David supplicated; the master became indignant. Ashamed of humbling himself in vain, the black physician spoke in a dignified tone of the services which he had rendered; of his zealous disinterestedness; of the small salary with which he was satisfied. Mr. Willis in a passion, told him 'that he was already too well treated for a slave.' At that word, David's indignation burst forth; for the first time in his life, he spoke as a man enlightened as to his rights. The master enraged, treated him as a contumacious slave, and threatened him with the chain. The black answered in passionate words. Within two hours, he was bound to a post and unmercifully whipped—and Cecile was dragged from before his eyes, a victim."

"The conduct of the master was most stupid and disgraceful, for the services of the negro were very essential to him."

"So essential, that the violence of passion to which he had given way, joined with the drunkenness in which he daily indulged, brought on an inflammatory disorder of the most aggravated character; the symptoms of which displayed themselves with the peculiar rapidity of such diseases, and he was thrown upon his bed in a violent fever. He dispatched an express to the nearest physician, but it was impossible for him to arrive before the lapse of thirty-six hours."

"The dangerous disorder of the man, seems to me like an act of retributive justice."

"The disorder made rapid progress: David alone could save the planter. But he, suspicious as all tyrants are, feared that David would poison him out of revenge; for the physician, after being whipped, was thrown into prison. Finally, alarmed by the progress of the disease, distracted by pain, and conscious that his only hope for life was to trust to the generosity of the slave, he ordered him to be introduced."

"And did David cure the planter?"

"During five days and nights he watched the planter with filial devotion; fighting the disease, step by step, with admirable learning and skill, and finally triumphed over it, to the great surprise of the neighboring physician, who had arrived on the second day after the attack."

"Restored to health, what did the planter do?"

"Unwilling to blush before the slave whose fidelity would be a daily rebuke, he succeeded in retaining at an enormous sum the physician who had been sent for; and David was forced back to the dungeon."

"'T was barbarously cruel; and yet I am not astonished at it, for David would have been to the planter a constant suggestion of remorse."

"The conduct was not entirely dictated by revenge and jealousy. The slaves of Mr. Willis loved David with all the ardor of gratitude: he was to them a physician both of the body and the soul. They were aware of the attentions which he had lavished on their master during his late sickness; and, emerging from the brute-like apathy into which slavery usually plunges the creature, these unfortunate men expressed in a very decided manner their indignation, when they saw David torn by the lash. Mr. Willis, exasperated, regarded all this as an indication of a revolt; and aware of the influence which David had acquired over the slaves, he believed that he would become the leader of an insurrection, to avenge himself for the execrable ingratitude of his master. This absurd suspicion was an additional motive for renewing his persecutions. A short time after these events, our party arrived in America. My lord had chartered a Danish brig at St. Thomas, and we visited incognito all the plantations on the coast that were accessible. We were received with munificent hospitality by Mr. Willis; and as much from a braggadocio spirit as from the excitement of wine, he related to us the evening after our arrival, embellished with disgusting jests, the history of David and Cecile; for I omitted to tell you, that the metisse had been thrown into prison as a punishment of her disdain. His Highness at first regarded this disgraceful confession as the extravagant boasting of intoxication. He was, indeed, intoxicated; but his disclosures of his own cruelty were no empty vaunt. To convince our incredulity, the planter rose reeling from the table, and telling one of the slaves to light a lantern,

he guided us to David's dungeon. Never, in my life, have I seen a more revolting sight! Pale, ghastly, covered with wounds, and half naked, David and the unfortunate girl were chained, by the middle of their bodies, at opposite ends of the dungeon: they looked like spectres: the dim light of the lantern gave them a more unearthly appearance. David at the sight of us uttered not a word, but his gaze was frightfully wild. 'Well, doctor,' said the planter with cruel irony, 'you who know so much, why don't you contrive to save yourself?' The negro replied not; but slowly lifting his right hand until his fore-finger pointed above, without looking at the planter, uttered in a devout tone, the awful name of 'God!' and was again silent. 'God!' exclaimed the planter, bursting into a laugh: 'tell Him to take you from me!' and raising his fist in a threatening manner, said with an oath, 'I defy God!'"

"The wretch must have been mad from drink or delirium."

"We were inspired with supreme disgust. My lord uttered not a word; but we left the dungeon together, which, like the house, was situated on the sea-shore. We returned aboard the brig, which was anchored near the coast. At one o'clock in the night—a time when all the inhabitants of the plantation were plunged in sleep—my lord lands with eight armed men, went to the dungeon, forced the doors, and bore away both David and Cecile. We carried the two unfortunate victims to the brig without being observed. My lord and myself then advanced to the planter's dwelling. Strange conduct! these men torture their slaves, yet take no precaution against them. They even sleep with their doors and windows open. We reached without impediment the planter's sleeping apartment, lighted by a night-lamp. My lord woke him up, his head still beclouded with the fumes of wine. 'You have this night defied God to remove from your hands the victims of your cruelty,' said his Highness: 'He has already removed them;' and taking from my hands a bag containing twenty-five thousand francs in gold, he threw it upon the bed, saying, 'this will indemnify you for the loss of the two slaves. To your violence which destroys, I have opposed a violence that saves. Let God judge between us;' and we disappeared, leaving Mr. Willis stupefied and immovable, fancying himself under the influence of a dream. In a few moments we were aboard the brig, and hoisted our sails."

"It seems to me, that his Highness paid the man quite handsomely for his slaves; for strictly speaking, David was already emancipated."

"We calculated the expenses incurred by David during his eight years of professional study, and added to it three times the value of himself and Cecile, as slaves. I grant that our conduct was an open defiance of the laws; but if you could have seen to what an awful situation the poor creatures were reduced, almost perishing by privation; if you could have heard the sacrilegious oath with which he defied the Almighty; you could have understood why my lord desired, on this occasion, to take into his own hands His attribute of justice."

"It has the same grounds for justification and censure as the punishment of the Schoolmaster; but had the adventure no unpleasant consequences?"

"It was not possible. The brig was under Danish colors; the incognito of his Highness was strictly preserved; we passed as rich Englishmen. To whom could Mr. Willis have complained, even if he dared to do it? In fact, the master predicted himself, that the slaves could not have lived one week longer in that awful dungeon, and the physician to his Highness made a deposition to the same effect. The greatest care was necessary to restore them. From that time to the present, David has been attached to my lord as his medical attendant. His gratitude is unbounded."

"David married Cecile doubtless, upon their arrival in Europe."

"The marriage, which promised to be such a happy one, was performed in the chapel of my lord's palace. But hardly was Cecile united to her husband, than forgetting all that David had suffered for her, all that she had herself suffered for him; caressed and flattered in the new society in which she moved; she became ashamed of her negro husband. Cecile, led astray by a depraved man, committed her first crime. One might have said, that the natural perversity of the woman only needed this fermentation, in order to display itself with terrible energy. You know the sequel of her history—are well acquainted with all her scandalous adventures. After two years' marriage, during which David had perfect confidence in her fidelity, he was quite suddenly aroused to the consciousness of his dishonor."

"He wished to kill his wife, it is said."

"Yes; but influenced by my lord's opinion, he consented that she should be shut up for life in some fortress; and it is this prison which my lord is now preparing to open—to your astonishment, my dear Baron; and, I do not disguise it to my own also."

"It does surprise me, Mr. Murph; more particularly, as the commander of the fortress has frequently informed my lord, that the woman is unreclaimable. In spite of her hardened disposition, my lord insists upon releasing her. Pray, what can be his motive?"

"I know as little of it as yourself, my dear Baron; but it is growing late, and his Highness desired that the courier should be started as soon as possible for Gerolstein."

"He will be on his way within two hours. We shall meet again to-night, my dear Murph."

"To-night!"

"Have you forgotten that the embassadress of —— gives a great ball to-night, and that his Highness is to be there?"

"True; true. Since the absence of Colonel Varner and the Count d'Harnein, I forget constantly, that I fill at the same time the offices of chamberlain and aid-de-camp."

"But when will they return? Will their mission soon be completed?"

"My lord will keep them away as long as possible, in order to enjoy solitude and liberty. As for the mission which his Highness gave them, in order to dismiss them politely—sending one to Avignon, and the other to Strasburg—I will confide it to you some day when we are in a gloomy mood; for I think that the most desperate hypochondriac will burst with laughter, not only at the object of their mission, but also at certain passages in the dispatches, which these two worthies bear with such important gravity."

"Indeed! I never could understand why his Highness took the Colonel and the Count into his confidential service."

"How so? Is not Colonel Varner a perfect pattern of an officer? Is there in all the German Confederation a finer form, better mustaches, or more martial gait? And when he is strapped up, caparisoned, bridled, and trimmed, is it possible to find a more triumphant, a more glorious, a prouder or finer——animal?"

"That is very true; but his beauty gives to his countenance an expression of great silliness."

"My lord says, that, thanks to the Colonel, the most stupid people in the world are no longer intolerable to him. As a preliminary to certain tedious audiences, he invariably shuts himself up with the Colonel for half an hour; and he comes out well disciplined and brave, prepared to encounter the very impersonation of ennui."

"For the same reason, I suppose, that the Roman soldier, prior to a forced march, used to wear leaden sandals, that any subsequent burthen might appear light. I now appreciate the usefulness of the Colonel; but how is it with Count d'Harnein?"

"He is also very useful to my lord. He is a sort of hollow and sonorous rattle-box, constantly by his side; an inflated soap-bubble, magnificently variegated, representing the puerile and theatrical aspect of sovereignty. In his presence, my lord feels more sensibly the vanity of all pomp; and by the association of contrast, is frequently indebted to a survey of the useless and glittering chamberlain, for his most serious and profitable ideas."

"At any rate, we must do him justice, my dear Murph. In what court could there be found a more perfect model of a chamberlain? Who is better acquainted than this excellent d'Harnein with the rules and traditions of etiquette? Who can wear with more gravity, an enamelled cross on his collar, or with more majesty a golden key on his back?"

"By the way, Baron, my lord says that a chamberlain's back has a physiognomy of its own: an expression at once constrained and revolting, painful to look at; for it is on that part of his corporosity that the symbolic sign of his office appears, and according to my lord, this worthy d'Harnein always seems inclined to present himself backward, that his entire importance may be discerned at once."

"In fact, it is the incessant subject of the Count's meditations, to ascertain by what deplorable fatality of ceremony the chamberlain's badge was placed upon his back; for he frequently remarks, with a sort of dolorous irritation, 'Why, the devil take it! people don't open the doors with their back.'"

"Baron, the courier! the courier!" said Murph, pointing to the clock.

"It is your fault that I have talked so long. Present my respects to his Highness," said M. de Graun, hastening to take his hat.

"Call here somewhat late to-night, my dear Baron; for I am sure that my lord will be desirous of visiting this very day the mysterious house in the rue Temple."

CHAPTER V.....A HOUSE IN RUE DU TEMPLE.

In order to improve the information which the Baron de Graün had collected concerning Goualeuse and François Germain, Rodolphe determined to visit the house in rue du Temple, and also the notary, Jacques Ferrand: to the latter, in order to obtain from Madam Seraphin some traces of Fleur de Marie's family; to the former, that he might discover the present residence of the Schoolmaster's son, by the assistance of Mademoiselle Rigolette. He presumed that this last task would be a difficult one; for the grisette was probably aware that Germain was much interested in concealing his new place of abode. Rodolphe supposed, that by hiring the room which had been vacated by the Schoolmaster's son, he would facilitate the search, and place himself in a situation to observe more intimately the different tenants of the building. On the very day of the conversation between the Baron de Graün and Murph, at about three o'clock in the afternoon, Rodolphe proceeded to the house in the rue du Temple. It was situated in a mercantile and populous part of the city, and in its external appearance offered nothing very peculiar to arrest the attention. It was composed of a floor level with the street, occupied by a wine-dealer, with four stories above it, in addition to the attics. A dark and narrow alley led to a small court-yard, or rather to a square cistern, five or six feet wide, entirely destitute of air and light; the infected receptacle of all the filth of the building, which showered down into it from the windows above; for air-holes without glasses opened above the leads of each landing-place. At the foot of the damp and dark staircase, a reddish glare indicated the porter's lodge—a place smoked by the burning of a lamp, which was necessary even at mid-day to lighten this dark abode—where we will now follow Rodolphe, attired somewhat in the style of a merchant's clerk in his ordinary apparel. He wore a sack of a doubtful color, a hat somewhat out of shape, a red cravat, immense overshoes; and in addition to an umbrella, carried in his hand a large bundle, nicely enveloped, to aid his disguise. He entered the porter's lodge, in order to obtain permission to visit the room which was to be let. A lamp, placed behind a globe filled with water as a reflector, gave light to the lodge; at the bottom of the room, there was a bed covered with a quilt of various colors, formed from a multitude of small pieces of stuff of all shades; at the left, a commode of walnut wood, the marble top of which supported, as an ornament, a small wax Saint John, with a white lamb and a curly periwig: the image was covered by a glass case, the holes in which were nicely patched with paper. Two candlesticks, once gilded, but now rusty with use, bear, instead of tapers, two wax oranges, doubtless a recent present to the *portière*.* Two boxes, one of variegated straw, and the other covered with small shells, even at the distance of a league would smell of the house of correction or the bagnio.† Between the two boxes, under a glass case, were a pair of diminutive doll's boots of red morocco, skilfully made and beautifully stitched. This chef d'œuvre, to speak in the language of art, together with an abominable smell of burnt leather, and fantastical arabesques drawn upon the wall, and innumerable pairs of worn-out boots and shoes scattered around, indicated that the porter of this mansion was both a shoemaker and a cobbler. When Rodolphe entered the lodge, Mr. Pipelet, the porter, being absent, was represented by his lady, Madam Pipelet, who, seated near a cast-iron stove in the middle of the lodge, was employed in gravely listening to the singing of her kettle.

Henri Monnier, the French Hogarth, has so admirably portrayed the portière, that we will only beg the reader to call to his recollection the most wrinkled, the most bloated, the most sordid, the most ragged, the most cross, the most venomous portière immortalized by that eminent artist, and he will have before his eye Madam Pipelet. We will only venture to add one feature to the ideal; a strange head-dress, consisting of a wig a la Titus, originally white, but faded by time into a variety of yellow, red, brown and gray shades—covering an inextricable confusion of locks, hard, stiff, bristled up, and tangled. Madam Pipelet, never for a moment relinquished this unique ornament of her aged head. At the sight of Rodolphe, the portière addressed to him the usual salutation, "Where are you going?"

"I believe, madam, that there is a room and a closet to be let, in this building?" said Rodolphe, emphasizing the word "madam," which seemed very grateful to the sponse of Pipelet: she replied, in a more amiable tone:

"There is a room vacant on the fifth floor; but it cannot be seen now, as Alfred has gone out."

"Your son, probably, madam? When will he return?"

"No, sir; he is not my son, but my husband. Why should n't Pipelet be called Alfred?"

"He has a perfect right to the name, madam; but if you will allow me, I will wait for him. I wish to hire the room very much; both the quarter and the street are very agreeable to me, and the house seems to be admirably kept. But before visiting the room, I should be pleased to know, madam, if you could take charge of my lodgings? I never like to employ any one but the *concierge*,* when I can obtain his consent." This proposal, with the flattering title of concierge, completely won Madam Pipelet.

"Certainly, sir," replied she; "I will take care of your room; I shall be proud to do so; and for six francs per month, you will be served like a prince."

"Agreed, madam, six francs. Your name, if you please?"

"Pomone Fortunée Anastasie Pipelet."

"Well, Madam Pipelet, I agree to give you six francs per month. And if the room suits me, what will be the rent of it?"

"With the closet, one hundred and fifty francs: not a farthing less. The lessee's† a dog—a dog that would shear an egg for it's wool."

"What is his name?"

"Mr. Bras-rouge."

The name awoke startling associations in Rodolphe's mind.

"You say, Madam Pipelet, that the lessee's name is——"

"Bras-rouge."

"And he lives?"

"Rue Fèves, No. 13. He keeps also a drinking-shop, on the Champs Elysees."

The same man, thought Rodolphe—a singular coincidence!

"If Mr. Bras-rouge is the lessee, pray who is the proprietor?"

"Mr. Bourdon; but my business is always with Mr. Bras-rouge."

Rodolphe, wishing to show his confidence in the portière, said to her, "My dear Madam Pipelet, I am somewhat fatigued and quite cold; do me the favor to go to the wine-dealer, whom I observe you have in your house, and bring me a bottle of cassis (a strong cordial) with two glasses, or rather three glasses, as your husband will soon be in." And he gave into her hands a five-franc piece.

"Why, dear sir, you wish to be adored at the very first visit!" exclaimed the portière; whose flowery nose seemed to sparkle with delight at the anticipated treat.

"Certainly, Madam Pipelet, I wish to be adored."

"It suits me well, it suits me well! but I shall bring only two glasses. Alfred and I always drink out of the same one, the dear fellow! he is so dainty in all that concerns the ladies!"

"Go, Madam Pipelet, we will wait for him."

"Should any one come in, you will take care of the lodge?"

"You may depend upon me."

The old woman retired.

Rodolphe, left alone, reflected upon the singular circumstances which had again brought him into contact with Bras-rouge. He was surprised that François Germain could have remained for three months in this house, without being discovered by the accomplices of the Schoolmaster, who were in communication with Bras-rouge.

Just at this moment, a letter-carrier rapped against one of the windows of the lodge, passed his arm through, and presented two letters, saying, "Three sous."

"Six sous for two letters?" said Rodolphe.

"One is marked paid," replied the carrier.

After having handed him the money, Rodolphe carelessly examined the two letters which he had received; but they soon appeared to him worthy of a more minute examination.

One, directed to Madam Pipelet, dispensed from its satin paper a strong perfume; on the red seal were seen the two letters C. R., surmounted by a helmet, and resting on a cross of the Legion of Honor: the direction was in a bold hand. The heraldric pretensions of the helmet and the cross, brought a smile to Rodolphe's lips, and confirmed the opinion which he had already formed, that the letter was not from a female.

But who could be the scented and emblazoned correspondent of Madam Pipelet!

The other letter, written on very ordinary paper, sealed with a wafer pricked with a pin, was directed to "Mr. Cesar Bradamanti, dentist"—evidently in a feigned hand, as the writing was in capital letters.

Was it a presentiment, a freak of the imagination, or a fact,

* The translator will be obliged to use this word of the original, from the want of any English word to express a female door-keeper.

† These articles are almost exclusively manufactured by convicts

* *Concierge* is the name given to porters of large establishments, and is of course a more honorable appellation than porter.

† The lessee, or as he is called in French, principal *locataire*, is the person who hires the house from the proprietor, and lets it to a porter or concierge, who makes the best of the rooms on his own account.

that this last epistle seemed to Rodolphe, to have a mournful aspect: he observed a few letters of the direction illegible on a part of the paper, evidently dampened by a falling tear.

Madam Pipelet now entered, bringing with her the bottle of cassis and the two glasses.

"I have been rather long, have I not, sir? But once in the shop of Father Joseph, it is almost impossible to get out—the old rogue! Would you believe it, that with a woman of my age he carries on his jokes?"

"The devil! if Alfred should happen to discover it."

"Don't speak of it; my blood grows cold at the thought. Alfred is as jealous as a Bedouin, and yet with Father Joseph, it is only a joke, upon my honor."

"Here are two letters which the carrier has just brought."

"Indeed, excuse me, sir. Have you paid for them?"

"Yes."

"You are very kind, my dear sir; and I will deduct it from the change which I have brought you. How much is it?"

"Three sous," said Rodolphe, smiling at the singular mode of reimbursement adopted by Madam Pipelet.

"How! three sous? it must be six sous: there are two letters."

"I might abuse your confidence, by charging you three sous discount instead of six; but I am incapable of the stratagem, Madam Pipelet. The letter, which is directed to yourself is paid for; and without being curious, I must observe, that you have a correspondent whose billet-doux smell very sweet."

"Let me see," said the portière, taking the letter on satin paper, "it certainly looks like a billet-doux; only think, sir, a billet-doux! I should like to know who the rogue is that would dare to write it."

"And if Alfred had happened to have been here?"

"Don't mention it, or I shall faint in your arms!"

"I will speak no more of it, Madam Pipelet."

"How foolish I am; now I know who it is from," said the portière, heaving up her shoulders. "It is from the commander. What a fright I was in! But this must not keep us from our reckoning. Let me see; it is three sous for the other letter, is it not? then we say fifteen sous for cassis, three sous for postage, which makes eighteen sous; eighteen, and two here, are twenty, which, with four francs, makes out the change: good reckonings make good friends."

"Keep the twenty sous, Madam Pipelet. You have such a skilful way of paying money advanced, that I mean to encourage it."

"Twenty sous! And do you give me twenty sous? And what for?" exclaimed Madam Pipelet, with the air of one astonished and alarmed at such disinterested generosity.

"It will serve as my farewell present, if I hire the rooms."

"I accept it on those conditions; but I must tell Alfred of it."

"Certainly. But here is the other letter, directed to Mr. Cesar Bradamanti."

"Oh, yes; the dentist on the fourth story. I am going to put it into the letter-boot."

Rodolphe thought he had misunderstood her; but he saw Madam Pipelet gravely throw the letter into an old boot, nailed to the side of the wall. Rodolphe looked at her with surprise.

"How?" said he; "you put that letter——"

"I put it into the letter-boot, so that it should not be lost. When the tenants come in, Alfred or myself make a distribution by upsetting the boot, and every one gets his own letter."

"Your house is so admirably kept, that I have a much stronger desire to become your tenant. The letter-box, in particular, delights me."

"It is but a simple contrivance," replied Madam Pipelet, modestly. "Alfred had this old boot with no mate to it, and he thought it would be just as well to turn it into use for the benefit of the lodgers."

The portière now took the letter on satin paper, and broke the seal. She turned it round in every direction, and finally said to Rodolphe, with much embarrassment, "Alfred reads all the letters: I cannot read. Will you do me the favor to read it for me?"

"With pleasure," said Rodolphe, taking the letter with the heraldic device, very anxious to know the correspondent of Madam Pipelet, and read as follows:

'To-morrow, Friday, at eleven o'clock, make a good fire in the two rooms, clean the mirrors thoroughly, remove the covers from the furniture, and take good care not to injure the gilding, while sweeping. If by chance I am not at home, when a lady calls for me about one o'clock, inquiring for Master Charles, ask her up into the parlor, lock the door, and bring down the key, which you must give into no hands but my own.'

In spite of the unscholarly composition of the note, Rodolphe understood perfectly its import, and said to the portière, "Who lives on the second floor?"

The old woman brought her yellow finger to her hanging lip, and replied, with a mischievous giggle, "Silence: 'tis an intrigue!"

"I asked the question, Madam Pipelet, because in taking rooms in a house, it is somewhat important to know its character."

"Quite natural, certainly. 'Tell me who you associate with, and I will tell you who you are,' is the proverb, is it not?"

"Yes; and I was just about to repeat it."

"I can inform you all that I know about this; it will not take long. About six weeks ago, an upholsterer came here, examined the second floor, which was 'to let,' asked the rent, and the next day returned with a handsome young man, light complexion, small mustache, cross of honor, and well dressed, whom the upholsterer called Commander."

"He belongs to the military, then?"

"The military!" replied Madam Pipelet, shrugging her shoulders; "bah! just in the same manner that Alfred gave himself the title of concierge."

"How so?"

"He only belongs to the National Guard, one of the staff; the upholsterer called him 'Commander' to flatter him. In fine, when the Commander (we know him by no other name,) had seen the rooms, he said to the upholsterer, 'It pleases me: arrange the rooms, and see the landlord.' 'Yes, Commander,' said the other; and the next day the upholsterer signed the lease, and paid Mr. Bras-rouge six months in advance; for it seems that the young man does not wish to be known. Immediately afterward, the workmen came, tore down everything on the second floor, brought sofas, silk curtains, gilded mirrors, superb furniture, and made it as beautiful as a cafe on the Boulevards; to say nothing of the carpets which were spread everywhere, so thick and so soft, that one could almost fancy she was walking on furs. When the room was finished, the Commander came to see it, and he said to Alfred: 'Can you take charge of my rooms, which I shall visit but seldom, make a fire, and arrange them for my reception, when I send you a note through the post-office?' 'Yes, Commander,' said Alfred, flattering him. 'And how much will you charge me?' 'Twenty francs a month.' 'Twenty francs! You must be jesting, porter?' said he; and he commenced beating down us poor people—only think of it, when he lays out the most abominable expense on an apartment which he does not occupy! so that, after a long chaffering, he succeeded in making Alfred promise to take care of the rooms for twelve francs! Twelve francs! is it not a shame? He a commander! commander of two farthings! How different with you, sir," continued the portière in a facetious manner; "you do not wish to be called Commander; you do not make any pretensions; and yet, you agreed with me for six francs per month, at the first word."

"Has the young man returned since?"

"Yes; that is the funniest part of it. It seems that a singular game is played with him: he has already written three times in the same manner he has done to-day, to make a fire, and put everything to rights, and that a lady would come."

"Did any one come?"

"The first of the three times the Commander arrived, feeling very nice, and humming a tune, and swelling out large. He waited for two hours and no one came. When he passed out before the lodge, Alfred and I were watching him, to see his looks and vex him. 'No little lady at all has been to see you, Commander,' said I. 'Very well! very well!' he replied, as mad as he could be, and biting his nails with anger.' The second time, before he arrived an errand-boy brought a small letter, addressed to 'Mr. Charles.' I suspected that he was duped again. Pipelet and myself were laughing in our sleeves when he arrived. 'Commander,' said I, raising the back of my left hand to my wig, like a real trooper, 'here is a letter for you; it seems that another countermarch is ordered to-day.' He looked at me proud as Artaban; opened the letter, read it, turned as red as a boiled lobster, and then said to us, trying to affect composure, 'I knew very well that nobody would come: I only called to tell you to take good care of the rooms.' It was not true: it was only to hide from us that he had been cheated. He went out of the house, twisting himself about, and singing at the end of his teeth; but he was very much vexed, depend upon it. Served him right! served him right! Puppenny commander! it will teach him to pay more for the care of his rooms."

"And the third time?"

"Ah! the third time! I thought it would be the lucky one. The Commander came, happy as a lord; his eyes started from his head, so sure he felt this time—very handsome young man at any rate, and sweet as a civet-cat—he hardly touched the ground, he was so puffed up. He took the key, and said to

us in a confident manner: 'You will tell the lady that it is the first door.' Well, we two Pipelets were so anxious to see the little lady, although we did not expect her much, that we left the lodge, and placed ourselves on the threshold of the alley door. That time, a little blue carriage with blue blinds up, stopped before the house. 'Good! here she is,' said I to Alfred; 'let us draw back a little, so as not to frighten her.' The coachman opened the door. We saw a small lady with a muff on her lap, and a black veil which concealed her face, to say nothing of the handkerchief which she held to her mouth, for she seemed to be weeping; but no sooner were the steps let down, instead of coming to the lodge, she said a few words to the coachman, who closed the door again in great astonishment."

"The woman did not come into the house, then?"

"No; she leaned back in her carriage, covering her face with her hands. I rushed forward, and before the coachman was on his seat, I said to him, 'Well, my brave fellow, you are going back again, then?' 'Yes,' said he. 'Where are you going?' I asked. 'Where I came from,' said he. 'But where did you come from?' said I. 'From rue Saint Dominique, corner of rue Belle Chasse.'"

At these words Rodolphe started. The Marquis d'Harville, one of his best friends, who had for some weeks been overwhelmed with the deepest dejection of spirits, resided in rue Saint Dominique, corner of Belle Chasse. Could the Marchioness d'Harville be thus rushing on her own destruction? had her husband any suspicion of her infidelity? was this the cause of the grief which devoured him? These doubts crowded into Rodolphe's mind. He knew all the intimates of the Marchioness, and he could not recall to his memory any one who bore the slightest resemblance to the Commander. The young woman, after all, might have taken a coach at that place without living there. Nothing could convince him that it was the Marchioness, and yet he could not remove a painful suspicion from his mind.

His anxious and diverted look did not escape the observation of the portière.

"Well, sir, what are you thinking about?" said she.

"I was thinking for what reason she could have come as far as the door, and then changed her mind so suddenly."

"Why, sir, a presentiment; a fright, a superstition: we poor women are so weak, so cowardly," said the brazen portière in a timid tone. "If I had been in that way—if I had designed to play any tricks with Alfred—I should have been obliged to start, I do not know how many times. But never! no, never! dear beloved soul! Not a man on earth——"

"I believe you, Madam Pipelet. But this young woman?"

"I do not know whether she was young or not: I could not see the tip of her nose. At any rate, she returned as she came, without drum or fife. Had any one given ten francs to Alfred and myself, we could not have been happier."

"Why so?"

"To think of the face which the Commander would put on, was enough to make us die with laughter. In the first place, instead of going to tell him that the lady had gone, we suffered him to remain a long time in expectation: then I went up. I had upon my feet my list-slippers. I arrived at the door—the first door: I gave it a push, and it creaked. The staircase is dark, and so is the entrance into the apartments. Just as I came in, the Commander took me in his arms, and said in the blandest tones, 'Oh dear! my angel, how late you have come!'"

In spite of the seriousness of Rodolphe's thoughts, he could not avoid laughing, particularly as he looked at the grotesque wig, and the hideously wrinkled and bloated face of the heroine of this ridiculous adventure. Madam Pipelet continued with grinning hilarity, that rendered her still more awful:

"Ha, ha, ha! that was a good one; but you should have seen it. I replied nothing. I held my breath, and abandoned myself to the Commander; but all at once he exclaimed, pushing me away from him—the coarse fellow—'Who the devil is this?' 'It is I, Madam Pipelet, the portière; and that's a good reason why you should keep your hands off, and not seize me by the waist, and call me your angel, and say that I came too late: what would have happened if Alfred should have seen you?' 'What do you want?' said he, furious with rage. 'Commander,' says I, 'the small lady has just arrived in a carriage.' 'Well, then, tell her to come up: you must be a fool!' I let him speak—I let him speak. 'It is true, Commander, that you told me to send her up.' 'Well.' 'But the little lady has gone back.' 'You must have said or done some foolish thing,' said he. 'No, Commander; the little lady did not leave her carriage, but when the coachman opened the door, she told him to take her back where she came from.' 'The carriage cannot be far off!' exclaimed the Commander, rushing for the door. 'Oh, yes, sir!' said I· 'it has been gone for an hour.' 'An hour! an hour! and why did you delay to inform me?' said he, with increasing rage. 'Because we were afraid it would have vexed you so much to be disappointed again. Take that,' said I to myself; 'it will teach you not to look disgusted the next time you touch me.' 'Go away,' said he, 'you only say and do foolish things;' and he threw his *a-la-Tartar* dressing-gown on the floor, and his Grecian cap of black velvet embroidered with gold—a beautiful cap for all that—and he was red with rage, and his eyes sparkled like glow-worms."

"And since that time neither he nor the lady have returned?"

"No: but wait for the end of the story."

CHAPTER VI..... THE THREE STORIES.

"THE end of the story; here it is," said Madam Pipelet. "I came directly down to Alfred. Presently the portière of No. 19, and the oyster-woman who stands by the door of the wine-merchant, came into our lodge. I told them how the Commander had taken me by the waist. What bursts of laughter! and Alfred, although he is very melan—yes, melancholic, as he calls it, since the deed of that monster Cabrion——"

Rodolphe looked at the portière with astonishment.

"Yes; some day when we are better acquainted, you shall know the whole of it. Alfred, in spite of his melancholic, began calling me 'his angel.' At this moment the Commander left his room, and locked the door in order to go away; but when he heard us laugh, he dare not come down for fear of being laughed at, for he would have to pass the lodge. We guess what he was at, and the oyster-woman cried out with a loud voice, 'Pipelet, you come very late, my angel!' Then the Commander went back to his room, and slammed the door with a tremendous noise, like the real madman that he is. He must have the temper of a tiger: the tip of his nose is white. Finally, he opened the door two or three times, to listen and ascertain whether there were people in the lodge. We did not move; but he, seeing that our friends were not going, made up his mind. He came down four steps at a time, and throwing me the key, ran off without one word, in the midst of our laughter, and while the oyster-woman was saying, 'you came too late, my angel.'"

"Are you not afraid of being turned out of his employment?"

"Oh! no, indeed! he would not dare to do it. We know where his angel lives; and if he said anything, we would threaten to reveal the story. Besides, for his poor twelve francs, who would take care of his rooms; if he introduced any woman here to take our bread out of our mouths we would soon make the place too hot for her Would you believe it, sir, he is mean enough to look after his own wood, and count the sticks? He must be some parvenu—some nincompoop, who has grown rich by chance; he has the head of a lord joined to the body of a beggar; he spends money one way, and saves it another. I do not wish him any harm; but it amuses me to see the manner in which his 'angel' makes him trot about, dance here and there in pursuit of a jack-o'-lantern, which he never can reach. I will bet that to-morrow he will be served with the same dish. I will tell the oyster-woman, and we will watch for the 'angel,' to see whether she is a brown or a white one. There must be a foolish husband in the case, who does not know what is growing on his forehead, poor dear silly man! To-morrow, we will see the little lady, in spite of her veil; she must cast her face very low, if we do not find out the color of her eyes. But excuse me; I must remove my kettle, for it has done singing. It contains some tripe to tickle Alfred's palate: he admires tripe, and he says himself, that for tripe he would betray France—his belle France—the old dear fellow!"

While Madam Pipelet was engaged with her household duties, Rodolphe was plunged in reflection. The female in question, whether the Marchioness d'Harville, or not, had unquestionably hesitated for a long time, before granting the first and the second interview. Frightened at the consequences of her imprudence, a salutary remorse had prevented her from fulfilling her rash promise. At last, drawn by some irresistible attraction, she had arrived in tears, agitated by a thousand apprehensions, at the very threshold of the house. But as she was about to be lost for ever, the voice of duty recalls her from remediless shame. And for whom does she brave so many dangers: so much disgrace! Rodolphe was thoroughly acquainted with the world; he had analyzed the human heart, and from the traits sketched by the portière, in rude but simple colors, he was able to supply, almost to a scientific certainty, the remaining features of the Commander's character. Who, but a man of the most contemptible vanity, could have his pride gratified by the appellation of a grade, absolutely insignifi-

cant in the military world? Who, but a man entirely destitute of tact, could have failed to envelope himself in an impenetrable incognito, so as to veil in the deepest mystery the steps of the female, who was jeopardizing her reputation for his sake! A man, in short, so foolish as not to know that the few louis, which his miserly spirit spared, would expose that female to the insolent and vulgar raileries of the people of this abode. The next day, impelled by a fatal influence, but conscious of the heinousness of her fault; having nothing to sustain her in her terrible anxiety, but her blind faith in the discretion, in the honor of the man to whom she was intrusting more than her life; the unhappy young woman approacked the appointed place, trembling, distressed, and found herself confronted with the prying looks, the insolent laugh of these debased menials: perhaps even their vulgar pleasantries reached her ear. What ignominy! what a lesson! what a sudden reaction for an imaginative mind, which had always associated the most charming and poetical illusions with the name of love! And the man who had exposed her to this disgrace—to these perils: was he not reached by the rending anxieties of which he was the cause? No: poor woman, passion-blind, thrown on the brink of an abyss; a courageous effort of virtue alone will save you! What idea will *he* entertain of this holy struggle? Spite, anger, wrath, that he has three times failed in his corrupt designs, and that his vanity is compromised in the eyes of a porter and his wife.

The vague thought now crossed Rodolphe's mind, that the Marchioness d'Harville might be the heroine of the adventure; and he asked himself, by what fatality, by what strange idiosyncracy of the female heart, M. d'Harville—young, accomplished, generous, devoted—could be sacrificed to a being, foolish, avaricious, contemptible, ridiculous? Could she be fascinated with the face of the young man, who was said to be handsome! Rodolphe knew the Marchioness to be a lady of heart, talent, and taste; of a soul elevated and spirituelle, against whose fame a whisper had never been breathed. Where could she have formed an acquaintance with such a man? Rodolphe had frequently visited at the hotel d'Harville; but he had never met with any individual who bore the remotest resemblance to the Commander; and he concluded his reflections by convincing himself that the Marchioness could not be the lady in question.

Madam Pipelet having finished her culinary duties, resumed her conversation with Rodolphe.

"Who lives on the third floor?" said he to the portière.

"Mother Burette, a fortune-teller—she reads your destiny in your hand, as in a book. Many persons of rank consult her; she earns heaps of money by it. And yet fortune-telling is only *one* of her pursuits."

"What else does she do?"

"She keeps, as one would say, a private pawnbroker's establishment."

"How is that?"

"I will tell you, because you are a young man, and it may be an additional inducement to become our tenant."

"Why so?"

"I will show you. The carnival will soon be here, when shepherds and shepherdesses, Turks and Arabs spring up under our feet. At that time the best of us are sometimes pinched, and it is always more convenient to have a resource in the house, than to be compelled to visit your aunt in the street."*

"To visit your aunt! you mean she lends on security?"

"Do you not know? Don't pretend to be green."

"I pretend to be green! How so, Madam Pipelet!"

"To ask me if my aunt lends on security."

"Because——"

"Because any young man knows that depositing anything at the mont de piete, is called going to my aunt."

"Oh, I understand: she lends money on the deposite of clothing, &c."

"To be sure she does, you rogue! And then it is perfectly simple, and you are not troubled with a heap of papers, receipts, and figures; no, not at all, not at all. You bring to Mother Burette a shirt worth three francs, and she lends you ten sous: after a week you return her twenty; if not, she keeps the shirt. Is it not simple! Always round accounts; a child could understand it."

"It is truly very simple; but I thought it was forbidden by the law."

"Ha, ha, ha!" exclaimed Madam Pipelet, bursting into laughter; "you must have just arrived from your native village, young man. Excuse me, but I speak to you as if I were your mother."

"You are very kind."

"Certainly, it is forbidden by the law to lend money on deposite; but if we only did what was lawful, we should all of us starve with our arms folded. Mother Burette does not write; she gives no receipts; there are no proofs against her, and she does not care a snap for the police. It is very amusing, I assure you, to see the articles which are brought to her; you then would form some idea of the way she loans money. I have seen her advance cash on a gray parrot, that swore like a trooper, the rascal!"

"A parrot! Pray, how much did she loan?"

"The parrot belonged to the widow of a merchant, who lives close by, in rue Saint Avoie, Madam Herblot. It was known that she attached a great value to her parrot: Mother Burette said to her, 'I will lend you ten francs upon your bird; but in a week, if you do not return me twenty francs——'"

"Twenty francs!"

"With the interest it amounted to twenty francs; always round accounts, as I said. 'If within a week,' said she, 'I have not my twenty francs, with the expense of the bird's food, I shall give Jacquot a little salad, sprinkled with a little arsenic.' The widow knew with whom she was dealing; and Mother Burette got her twenty francs after seven days, and the ugly bird was taken away, swearing in such a manner as to make Alfred blush: and why not? his father was a priest. During the revolution, you know, many a priest was married to a nun."

"And Mother Burette has no other trade, I suppose?"

"No other, if you wish it so; yet I do not know what to call her business in a small room, where no one enters but Bras-rouge, and an old one-eyed woman called Chouette."

Rodolphe looked at the portière in surprise. "Indeed!" said he; "and for what does that woman come here?"

"We have not seen her for six weeks, until she came here the day before yesterday: she was a little lame."

"And what has she to do with the fortune-teller?"

"That is what I do not know. When Mother Burette, Bras-rouge, and the one-eyed woman go into the room together, I have always observed that Chouette brings in a bundle under her arm, and Bras-rouge another under his cloak; but they never carry away anything."

"And what do the packages contain?"

"I know nothing about it. I only know that they make a devil of a cooking; for we smell sulphur, coal, and melted pewter, in passing up the staircase; and then we hear the blast of a bellows, like that of a blacksmith. I am sure that Mother Burette must be contriving something for fortune-telling, or practicing the black art; at least, that was what Mr. Cesar Bradamanti, the tenant on the fourth floor, told me was going on. Now, that is a fellow for you—that Mr. Cesar. When I say that he is a fellow, I mean that he is an Italian, although he speaks French as well as you or I do. He is a knowing one! he is acquainted with all the plants, and herbs, and drugs of all kinds; and then he pulls teeth, not for money, but for the honor of it: if you have six defective teeth, he will pull five of them for nothing—he will only charge you for the sixth."

"That is certainly very generous."

"Besides, he sells very fine water to keep the hair from falling out, to cure pains in the eyes, corns, weakness of the stomach, and to destroy rats."

"What! does the same water which cures pains in the stomach, kill rats?"

"Without sparing one; for it has the remarkable property of being healthy to man and fatal to animals."

"Just so, Madam Pipelet: *that* did not occur to me."

"And what proves that it is a most excellent water is, that it is made from herbs which Mr. Cesar himself gathered on Mount Lebanon; where some Americans live, from whom he bought his horse, that looks like a tiger, for it is white, sprinkled with bay spots. When Mr. Cesar Bradamanti is on his horse, dressed in his red coat with yellow trimmings, and his hat with a plume in it, and his long red beard; speaking with respect, one would say, that he looks like Judas Iscariot. About a month since, he engaged the son of Mr. Bras-rouge, little Tortillard, whom he has dressed up like a troubadour, with a black cap and lace collar, and a peach-colored jacket: he beats the drum around Mr. Cesar, to attract customers; and he also takes care of the dentist's tiger-horse."

"It seems to me, that the son of your lessee fills a very menial situation."

"His father says, that he wishes to send him to sea, that he may not end his days on the gallows. He is a most wicked and malicious monkey; he has played a thousand tricks on Mr. Cesar, who is the very cream of good-nature, and has cured Alfred of the rheumatism. Well, sir, there are people wicked enough to say——but no, it makes my hair stand on end: Alfred says it

* The phrase "visit your aunt," means to go to the *monte de piete*, a large pawnbroker's establishment, got up by the government, for the accommodation of the needy.

would send him to the galleys: I dare not mention it. But people do say—and as you are to be our tenant, I may just hint it—they do say, that when a young girl has been imprudent and fears the consequences, Mr. Cesar——"

"We will speak no more of it," said Rodolphe, shuddering with horror at the revolting crime which was intimated.

"Oh! I do not believe it, I assure you," said Madam Pipelet: "it is all envy and jealousy, and the slanderous tongues of people. It is not possible that a man who cured Alfred of the rheumatism, who has brought a spotted horse from Mount Lebanon, who pulls five teeth out of six for nothing, who has certificates from all parts of Europe, and who pays his rent punctually, can be guilty of any such enormity: I had rather die than believe it."

While Madam Pipelet was anathematizing the slanderers of the dentist, Rodolphe adverted to the letter which had attracted his curiosity. He was convinced, that the presentiment of evil with which it inspired his mind, had some connection with the atrocious reports in circulation about the Italian: to the discerning mind of Rodolphe, it revealed some terrible drama.

"But here is Alfred," said the portière; "and he will tell you that there can be nothing but evil tongues against the man who has cured him of the rheumatism, brought a spotted horse from Mount Lebanon, pulls six——"

CHAPTER VII. ..... MONSIEUR PIPELET.

THE events which we are now relating occurred in 1838.

Mr. Pipelet entered the lodge with an air grave and magisterial. He was about sixty years of age; with a respectable corporosity, an enormous nose, and a large face, fashioned somewhat like the wooden nut-crackers from Nuremburg; while a large, dusty, broad-brimmed hat, surmounted the singular mask which was a substitute for a face. As the female Pipelet never removed her fantastical peruke, so the male member of the copartnership never dispensed with his no less remarkable headpiece. He wore a large green coat, with a stained collar, enormous pants, and in spite of the official air which his distinguished equipments gave him, he had not laid aside a leather apron, the unassuming emblem of his trade, which hardly covered a vest of as many colors as his spouse's quilt. One could easily discern in his wamble-cropped countenance, an indication of the excessive despondency of which his wife had informed Rodolphe that Monsieur Pipelet was the victim.

"Alfred, this gentleman is an applicant for the vacant room and closet on the fifth floor," said Madam Pipelet, introducing our hero; "and we have been waiting for you to drink with us a glass of cassis, which he has had the goodness to send for."

This delicate attention removed all reserve from M. Pipelet's mind; and touching his hat to Rodolphe, he said in a grum voice, worthy the low bass of a first-rate organ:

"We will give you as much satisfaction as porters, as we meet with in you as a tenant; 'birds of a feather flock together;' unless," said Pipelet, interrupting himself, "you should happen to be a painter."

"No; I am a merchant's clerk."

"Then I am your most humble servant. I congratulate nature for not having made you a painter. They are monsters."

"What! painters monsters?" exclaimed Rodolphe.

Pipelet did not vouchsafe an answer, but raised his eyes toward heaven, in remonstrance, for permitting such a race as painters to exist on the earth.

"Painters have turned the cup of Alfred's life into bitterness. They have produced the deep melancholy which is undermining his constitution," said Madam Pipelet to Rodolphe, in a low voice; then continued, in a caressing tone: "Come, Alfred, shake off your gloom; think no more of that vagabond; it will injure you, it will destroy your appetite."

"I will arouse myself: I will vanquish the tyrant," said Mr. Pipelet, in a tone at once resigned and determined. "*He* has done me much harm: he was my persecutor, my tormentor during a long time; but now I despise him. Painters!" continued he, addressing Rodolphe, "are the pest of a house—its ruin."

"Have you ever had a painter for a tenant?"

"Alas! yes, sir; we once had a painter," said Mr. Pipelet, shuddering at the recollection. "His name was Cabrion;" and the assumed resignation of the afflicted mortal, seemed to give way at that word.

"Was he the last tenant of the room which I am proposing to hire?" asked Rodolphe.

"Oh! no, no! The last tenant was an honest and worthy young man, by the name of Germain. His predecessor was Cabrion, who before he left almost unseated my reason."

"What! on account of your regrets for his intended departure?"

"Regrets for Cabrion!" said the porter, overwhelmed with astonishment at the supposition. "Regrets for Cabrion! Why, Mr. Bras-rouge advanced him two quarters rent to quit the premises; for he had been unfortunate enough to give him a lease. What a scoundrel! You cannot form an idea of his outrageous tricks. To mention only one; there is not a wind instrument, but what he basely made an accomplice in his plan to vex the inhabitants. Yes, sir, from the French horn to the serpent, he abused everything, carrying his villainy so far as designedly to play out of tune for entire hours. It was enough to drive me crazy. More than twenty petitions were presented to the lessee, to dismiss the scoundrel. At last, sir, he succeeded in getting rid of him by advancing two quarters' rent. Was it not a great sum to pay to a tenant? But three would have been given, rather than keep him. He finally started, and I flattered myself that it was all over with Cabrion. You shall see. The next night I was in bed at eleven, when I heard—knock, knock, knock, at the door. I pulled the string, and some one came into the lodge. 'Good evening, porter,' said a voice. 'Will you give me a lock of your hair?' My wife said it must be somebody that had mistaken the house. 'You do not want anybody here,' said I; 'go to the next door.' 'This is No. 17, is it not? and the porter's name is Pipelet?' said the voice. 'Yes,' said I, 'my name is Pipelet.' 'Well, Pipelet, I come to ask a lock of your hair for Cabrion. He wants it very much.'" Mr. Pipelet looked at Rodolphe, crossed his arms in a statuesque manner, and continued:

"Do you understand me, sir? It was from me, Pipelet; his mortal enemy, whom he had so deeply outraged, that he had the impudence to ask for a lock of hair—a favor which ladies often refuse to their best beloved!"

"Yet, if that painter Cabrion had been a good tenant, like Mr. Germain?" said Rodolphe, inquiringly.

"Had he been a good tenant," said the man in the chapeau, with great dignity; "had he been a good tenant, I never would have granted him a lock of my hair. It is not a part of my principles, nor my habits, to grant such keepsakes; but I should have taken the trouble to refuse the favor, with as much civility as possible."

"And that is not all," said the portière. "From that day the rascal let loose a swarm of fiddlers, dancers, and vagabonds, who came every day, morning, noon, and night, to ask Alfred for a lock of his hair—always for Cabrion."

"And do you think I yielded?" said Pipelet, with determined looks. "No, sir; I would rather have been dragged to the gallows, than have yielded them a single hair. After three or four months of obstinacy on their part, resistance on my own, my energy triumphed over their perseverance. They saw that they had to deal with an iron bar, and they were obliged to renounce their insolent pretensions. But, notwithstanding, the struggle implanted a wound here," and the afflicted man placed his hand on his heart, "from which I shall never recover. My sleep would not be more disturbed, had I committed the greatest crimes. Every minute I start from my slumbers, thinking that I hear the voice of Cabrion. I mistrust everybody; I see an enemy in every one; the milk of kindness has curdled in my bosom. I cannot see a face through the windows of the lodge, without thinking that it may be one of the relentless gang of Cabrion. I have become gloomy, downcast, and desperate as a malefactor. I dare not open my soul to any new acquaintance, through fear that he may be a disguised myrmidon of Cabrion. I have lost taste for all my old pursuits, my old pleasures." Here Madam Pipelet raised her forefinger to the corner of her eye, as if to wipe away a tear, and made a reluctant sign of affirmation with her head. Alfred continued, in a still more lugubrious tone: "It is only, sir, by the most desperate efforts, that I occasionally assume a cheerful look; that I force a smile to my face, while the canker is gnawing at my heart. Was I wrong, sir, in telling you that this infernal Cabrion had poisoned my existence?" and Mr. Pipelet heaved a deep sigh, and drew his hat lower over his brows, overwhelmed with his calamities.

"I can conceive now," said Rodolphe, "the cause of your indignation against painters. But this Mr. Germain, of whom you spoke, did he not make amends for the affliction caused by Cabrion?"

"He was a good and fine young man: frank, obliging, and polite; the very reverse of Cabrion, the most malicious of human beings."

"Be calm, I beg of you, Mr. Pipelet; do not advert to a name so associated with your embittered existence: be so obliging as to inform me, what porter is so lucky as to possess now Mr. Germain—that pearl of lodgers?"

"Neither of us know: nobody knows where Mr. Germain now resides. When I say nobody, I except Mademoiselle Rigolette, of course."

"Who is this Mademoiselle Rigolette?" asked Rodolphe.

"A little seamstress," replied Madam Pipelet, "the other occupant of the fifth floor—another pearl of a lodger. She pays her rent in advance: she is as neat and tidy as a kitten, in her room; gay and cheerful as a bird of paradise, and industrious as a beaver: she sometimes earns two francs a day, by hard labor."

"But how is it, that Mademoiselle Rigolette alone knows the residence of Mr. Germain?"

"When he left the house he said to us, 'I do not much expect any letters; but if by chance any are brought for me, please give them to Mademoiselle Rigolette;' and she well deserves his confidence, even if the letter contained money: does she not, Alfred?"

"There would be nothing against Mademoiselle Rigolette, if she had not allowed herself to be flattered by that infamous Cabrion."

"As for that, Alfred, it is not the fault of the young woman, but the locality. It was the same with the travelling clerk who occupied the room before Cabrion, and the same with Mr. Germain, who came after the wretch, and was very particular in his attentions to Mademoiselle Rigolette: it is wholly owing to their being such near neighbors."

"Must the tenant of the room I propose to occupy, be necessarily devoted to the fair seamstress?"

"Certainly, sir: the two rooms are adjoining, and between young people there is always a light, or some coals, or some water to borrow; and as for water, one is always sure to find it in Mademoiselle Rigolette's room—she is never without it; it is her luxury; she is a real little duck the moment she has leisure: she is always in the water, and that is the reason she is so neat."

"So, she and Mr. Germain were good neighbors, you say!"

"Yes, sir: it may be said that they were made for each other, they were both so gentle and so young. It was a pleasure to see them come down the stairs on Sunday, their only leisure day: she, nicely clad in a pretty cap, and a sweet gown which she had made herself, and which, though only costing twenty-five sous a yard, fitted her as nicely as a queen's most costly dress."

"But has not Mr. Germain seen Mademoiselle Rigolette since he left the house?"

"No, sir, unless on Sundays: for at other times, Mademoiselle has no time to think of beaux, I assure you. She rises at five or six, and frequently works till eleven at night: she never leaves her room except early in the morning, to go after food for herself and her two canaries, and the three all together eat but a very little. What do they need? two sou's worth of milk, a little bread, sallad, chickweed, and fine clear water, and that keeps the trio prattling and warbling all the day. Then, although she works twelve hours out of the twenty-four, and has great difficulty in earning her living, she is as charitable as if she owned a mint of gold. Mademoiselle Rigolette and Mr. Germain, almost supported a poor family that live in the attic, whom Mr. Bras-rouge will throw out of doors one of these days."

"Have you, then, a poor family in the house?"

"Poor? good Heaven! five young children, the mother dying in her bed, the grandmother an idiot; and to support them all, a man, who works twenty hours in the day, and has his four hours of sleep disturbed by the squalling of children, the groans of a wife dying on the straw, and the idiot grandmother; who, when she is hungry, roars like a she wolf, for she has no more reason than a brute: when she is quite hungry, you can hear her roaring even in the porter's lodge."

"It is frightful," exclaimed Rodolphe; "and does no one aid them?"

"We do all we can, but are none of the richest ourselves. Since the Commander gives twelve francs a month for taking care of his rooms, I am able to make a soup once a week, and the poor people above get a portion of it. Mademoiselle Rigolette sits up all night, furnishing light at her own expense, to make clothes for the little ones, out of remnants of stuff. Then poor Mr. Germain, who was not rich himself, pretended occasionally to receive from home a bottle of wine, and gave Mr. Moran (that is his name,) a glass or two, which seemed to revive his courage and warm him up."

"Did not the quack do anything for these poor people?"

"Mr. Bradamanti?" asked the portière.

"He cured my rheumatism," said Pipelet, "and I respect him for it: but since that day, I said to my wife, 'Anastasie, Mr. Bradamanti's generosity is all in my eye;' did n't I, wife?"

"It is true, Mr. Bradamanti is a queer one; he likes to laugh in his own way, although he never opens his mouth when he laughs.

"Well, what did he do?"

"When I spoke to him about the poverty of the Morans, he told me that, 'since they were so poor, if they had teeth to be pulled, he would not charge them anything for the sixth, and would sell them a bottle of his curative water, for half price;' and although he cured my rheumatism, I maintain that it was an unfeeling jest: but he never has any jests but those which are unfeeling."

"But you must remember, Alfred, that he is an Italian, and perhaps that is the way that they jest at home."

"I have a decidedly bad opinion of the man, Madam Pipelet, and shall cultivate his society much, I assure you!" said Rodolphe; "but was not the private pawnbroker more charitable?"

"In the same way with the dentist. She lent them money while they had anything to deposite; all went by the board; even their last mattress—for they had but one."

"And does she not aid them now?"

"She is more hard-hearted than her lover; for I believe that Bras-rouge is her lover: the Indian summer is as warm as any other summer, isn't it Pipelet!" and the old woman winked knowingly with her eye, but Mr. Pipelet made no other answer than to draw his hat over his eyes in a desponding mood.

Since the portière had evinced such charitable feelings for the poor people in the attic, she appeared much less repulsive to Rodolphe.

"And what is the trade of the poor man?"

"He is a lapidary: he works by the job, and has worked so hard as to become deformed. After all, a man is but a man; and he can only do what he can do; and when he has seven mouths to fill besides his own, he must pull pretty hard, I assure you. And yet, his eldest daughter aids him all she can, which is not much."

"How old is she?"

"Seventeen, and beautiful as a star. She is chambermaid to an old kangaroo, rich enough to buy all Paris: a notary, called Mr. Jacques Ferrand."

"Mr. Jacques Ferrand," said Rodolpne, surprised at this new development. "Does he live in rue du Sentier?"

"Precisely. Do you know him?"

"He is a notary for the mercantile house with which I am connected."

"Well, then; you must know that he is an usurer. I must do him the justice to say, that he is sedate and pious; goes to vespers, mass, and confessional; associates with priests; eats holy bread and drinks holy water—a perfect saint: a sort of savings' bank, with whom poor people deposit their money; but he is as miserly and hard toward others as he is toward himself. It is now eighteen months since poor Louise, the lapidary's daughter, has been with him; she is as mild as a lamb, and works like a slave. She does all the labor at his house, and only has eighteen francs a month for her wages, not a sous more: she keeps six francs for her clothing, and gives the remainder to her father. But what is that among seven persons?"

"But then the work of her father, if he is industrious?"

"Industrious! he is the hardest laborer in the world; and would ask God for no other blessing than to make the day forty-eight hours long, that he may earn a little more bread for his children."

"His work then does not produce him much?"

"He was confined to his bed for three months, and that put him behindhand. His wife ruined her health in taking care of him, and is now dying. During those three months they had to live on Louise's twelve francs, and with what they borrowed from Mother Burette, and a few francs that were lent him by the man for whom he works. If you could only see their room—but let us speak no more of it; our dinner is ready, and the thought of that attic takes away all my appetite. Fortunately, Mr. Bras-rouge will soon turn them out of the house. I do not wish them any harm; but as their misery is beyond our power to relieve, it is better that they should be in some other place: it will be one sorrow the less."

"But if they are turned out from this house, where can they go?"

"Why, sir, I do not know."

"And how much can he earn a day, the poor fellow?"

"If he were not obliged to take care of his wife and mother, he might earn four or five francs, by working very steadily; but as he loses about half of his time in taking care of them, he cannot earn more than two francs."

"Indeed, it is a very small sum for so many poor people."

"Yes, you may well say poor people. But there are so many

of the same sort in the world, we must console ourselves with the idea that we cannot help it. But speaking of consolation, are you not going to drink some of the cassis?"

"Frankly speaking, what you have just told me, Madam Pipelet, has touched my heart; I beg of you, therefore, to drink to my health with Mr. Pipelet."

"You are very kind, sir," said the porter; "but do you not wish to see the room up stairs?"

"Certainly: and if it pleases me, I will pay an advance upon it."

The porter now left the lodge, and Rodolphe followed him.

CHAPTER VIII..... THE FIVE STORIES.

THE dark and damp staircase appeared still more gloomy and repulsive on this bleak winter day. The entrance to every apartment in the house, seemed marked by its distinguishing feature. The door of the room occupied by the Commander, was freshly painted in imitation of mahogany; a bright brass knob glittered on the lock; and a fine silk cord, with a tassel hanging from the bell, was in striking contrast with the dull and dusty wall.

The door of the fortune-teller had a symbolical owl nailed by the claws and wings above it; a shifting jalousie supplied the place of one of the panels, which enabled the pythoness to inspect the individuals who were approaching the oracle.

The dwelling of the Italian charlatan, who was suspected of an infamous trade, had also its peculiarities. His name could be read, traced in horses' teeth, inlaid in a frame of black wood, fixed on the door; the bell-string terminated with the embalmed hand and arm of a monkey. As Rodolphe was passing the door, he heard a short, sharp, convulsive cry, as if drawn from the depths of agony. By a motion quicker than thought, he ran to the door and pulled the bell-string with violence.

"What is the matter?" said the porter, in astonishment.

"That cry!" said Rodolphe; "did you not hear it?"

"The dentist is probably pulling a tooth," said Pipelet.

The explanation, though natural, did not appear satisfactory to Rodolphe. The bell, though rung with force, was not for some time answered. Several doors were opened and closed; then, through a bull's eye near the entrance, and upon which Rodolphe's own glance was unwittingly fixed, a lank cadaverous face, with red hair slightly gray, and a long beard of the same color, appeared and vanished. During the short interval that the apparition showed itself, Rodolphe thought that he recognized well known features. Those piercing sea-green eyes, those large brows, that livid paleness, that protruding nose, crooked as an eagle's bill, with nostrils singularly dilated, were the marked and unmistakable features of the same Abbé Polidori who had been anathematized by Murph during his conversation with Baron de Graün.

Although Rodolphe had not seen the Abbé Polidori for sixteen or seventeen years, his features were impressed upon his memory by so many bitter recollections, that it was impossible for their lineaments to escape him. But what made him doubt the identity of the Abbe with the red-haired charlatan was, that Polidori himself had very black hair. But on the supposition that his suspicions were correct, Rodolphe was not the least surprised to see a man, invested with a sacred character—a man whose superior intelligence, learning and ability, he well knew—fall into such an abyss of degradation; for that intelligence and ability were allied to such irregular conduct, to such base inclinations, such a perfect contempt for mankind, and such profound perversity, that this man once reduced to merited misery, would naturally seek the least hononorable resources; feeling a sort of misanthropic and sardonic satisfaction in imposing upon the credulity of the human race. The difference between the two men was so marked, that Rodolphe could not rest with much confidence in his conclusions concerning their identity, and he said to Mr. Pipelet:

"Is it long since Mr. Bradamanti has lived in this house?"

"About a year. He came here last January. He is a very punctual tenant, and he has cured me of the rheumatism; but, as I said before, he has one fault; he sneers too much in his talk; he has kind feelings toward nobody."

"How so?"

"In short, sir," said Mr. Pipelet, seriously, "I am not very particular, but this constant sneering and laughing I cannot stand. He looks like a dead man, and when he laughs he does not open his lips. He cares not for anything, neither father nor mother, God nor the devil. He sneers at everything, and these jests of his sometimes make me shudder. When he has spent about a quarter of an hour, talking with me about the half-dressed women in the different savage countries which he has visited, and I afterward find myself alone with Anastasie—I sir, who have made it for thirty-seven years, a matter of duty and habit to cherish and love Anastasie—it seems to me that I take less pleasure in her society than I did before. You will laugh; but sometimes when Mr. Cesar has described to me the feasts of the princes that he has visited, it seems to me that my own food is bitter, and I cannot eat it. In short, sir, I love my trade, and am proud of it. I might have been a shoemaker, like many other ambitious men, but I think I am quite as useful in mending old shoes. And yet there are days when that Mr. Bradamanti makes me regret that I am not a bootmaker. And again, sir, he has such a way of talking about the savage women whom he has known, that although I am not very modest, he absolutely makes me blush," said Mr. Pipelet, with the accent of a man whose delicacy was shocked.

"Does Madam Pipelet tolerate such things?"

"Anastasie has a great passion for wit, and with all his faults, Mr. Cesar has a great deal of it. I certainly hate Mr. Cabrion, and shall as long as I live; but it seems to me sometimes as if I should prefer the low tricks which he had the boldness to play in the house, to the sneering manner with which Mr. Cesar retails his jokes, compressing his lips, in a manner that reminds me of the death of my uncle Piousselot."

These few words of the porter, describing the perpetual irony of the charlatan's conversation, and the manner in which he embittered the most harmless pleasures by his sarcasms, strongly confirmed Rodolphe's suspicions of his identity with the Abbé: for, when Polidori first laid aside his mask of hypocrisy, he affected the most audacious and revolting skepticism. Determined, as soon as possible, to dispel his doubts, and ascertain whether the Abbé was a resident of the house, Rodolphe followed the porter to the floor above, where the room was which he designed to hire. The apartment of Mademoiselle Rigolette was next to it; and, thanks to the charming gallantry of the painter, the mortal enemy of Mr. Pipelet, readily distinguishable. Half a dozen round cheeked Cupids, painted in the style of Wateau, formed a group around a scroll: one held a thimble, another a pair of scissors; this one a looking-glass, that a flat-iron; and in the scroll, on a light-blue ground, could be read in rose-colored letters, MADEMOISELLE RIGOLETTE, SEAMSTRESS; the whole was surrounded with a garland of flowers, which had a very pretty effect upon the light-green color of the door, and was in fine contrast with the ugly staircase.

At the risk of opening afresh the bleeding wounds of Alfred, Rodolphe said to him, pointing to the door: "This is, probably, Mr. Cabrion's handy-work?"

"Yes; he took the liberty of spoiling the paint of this door, by his indecent sketches of naked children, which he calls, 'loves.' If it had not been for the supplications of Mademoiselle Rigolette, and the weakness of Mr. Bras-rouge, I would have scraped the whole of it out, as well as the pallet which the scoundrel has drawn upon your door."

Rodolphe followed the porter into this room, sufficiently spacious, with a closet adjoining, and lighted by two windows which looked into the rue du Temple; a few fantastical sketches on the inside door had been scrupulously respected by Mr. Germain. Too many reasons urged Rodolphe to inspect more closely the mansion in which he now was, to make him hesitate long upon closing the bargain; he, therefore, modestly placed two francs in the porter's hand, saying:

"This room suits me perfectly; here is part of the rent in advance. I suppose it will not be necessary to see Mr. Bras-rouge?"

"No, sir; he only comes here now and then, to visit Mother Burette. The business is always intrusted to me. It will only be necessary to inquire your name?"

"Rodolphe."

"Rodolphe what?"

"Rodolphe—nothing more, Mr. Pipelet."

"Very well, sir. I did not ask through curiosity. Names and wills are free."

"Tell me, Mr. Pipelet, ought I not to-morrow, as a new comer, ask the Morels if I cannot assist them in some manner, since my predecessor, Mr. Germain, assisted them according to his means?"

"Yes, sir, it will be best; although it cannot be of much use, since they will have to leave soon. But it will be a kind of attention which will please them." Then, as if a thought suddenly struck him, Mr. Pipelet exclaimed, looking at his tenant with a sly and mischievous look: "I understand, I understand. It will be a good excuse for being a friendly neighbor with the little girl in the next room."

"Certainly."

"There will be no harm in it, I assure you. It is customary; and I am sure that Mademoiselle Rigolette has overheard us

while we have been examining the room, and is now watching to see you go down. I will designedly make a noise, and do you look in when she opens the door."

The door, so prettily decorated with Wateau's Cupids, now slightly opened, and Rodolphe could vaguely distinguish a little rose-colored nose, and a large, black, brilliant, and curious eye, which, as he halted for an instant, slowly withdrew, and the door suddenly closed.

"Did I not tell you she was watching? But excuse me for a moment: I must visit my little observatory."

"What is that?"

"At the top of the ladder is the landing, on which opens the door into Morel's attic; and behind one of the walls, there is a dark hole, where I put old rags. As the wall is very slanting, when I am in my hole I can see into their room, and I can hear what they say as well as if I was with them. I do not take my place there as a spy upon their movements, but I go to visit them, to *see* them, as one would a frightful melodrama; so that when I return to my lodge, I may fancy it a palace. Would you like to see them? It is gloomy, but it is curious when you can watch them unobserved; for otherwise they are like wild animals, they are so much frightened."

"You are very kind, good Mr. Pipelet: some other day, perhaps to-morrow, I will improve your offer."

"When you like, sir: but I must go up to the observatory, as I am in need of some leather. If you will go down I will join you soon;" and Mr. Pipelet commenced an ascent which was rather perilous for a man of his age.

Rodolphe threw a last glance at the door of Mademoiselle Rigolette, with the thought that this young girl—the old friend of Fleur de Marie—possessed a secret which would carry joy to the heart of a bereaved mother. When he reached the story beneath, he heard the noise of some one departing from the door of the charlatan. The light step of a female fell upon the floor, and the rustle of a silk dress reached his ear. Rodolphe paused for a moment, but hearing nothing, advanced. Having reached the second story, he observed and raised from the last stair a handkerchief. It belonged doubtless to the person who had this moment left the room of the charlatan. Rodolphe approached one of the narrow windows which lighted the hall, and examined the handkerchief, which had a magnificent border of the finest lace. He found worked in one of the corners, the letters N. and L., surmounted by a ducal coronet. The handkerchief was literally bathed in tears. The first thought of Rodolphe, was to hasten and return the article to the individual who had lost it; but he hesitated, through fear that such a movement might be construed into impertinent curiosity. Having thus involuntarily lighted upon the traces of a mysterious and doubtless criminal adventure, he determined to retain it. When he reached the lodge of the portière, he said to her, "Did you not observe a woman descend the stairs?"

"No, sir; there was a lady, distinguished and delicate, who came out from Mr. Cesar's room. Little Tortillard went to call for her a coach, which she ascended. But what surprised me is, that the little rascal himself mounted up behind, in order to learn where the lady goes; for he is as curious as a magpie, and active as a ferret, although one of his legs is lame."

"Thus," thought Rodolphe, "the name and the abode of this female will be known to the charlatan, and for that reason he has ordered Tortillard to follow the stranger."

"But how does the room suit you?" said the portière.

"Perfectly. I have hired it, and to-morrow I will send my furniture."

"It was a blessing that you passed our door. We shall have a famous tenant: you have the appearance of being an excellent boy. Pipelet will always love you: you will make him laugh in the same manner that Mr. Germain did, for he had always something farcical to say; and the poor dear man needs a laugh amazingly. I do not doubt that before a month passes, you will be excellent friends."

"You flatter me, Madam Pipelet."

"Not at all: what I say is exactly as if I opened my heart to you; and if you will only be kind to Alfred, how grateful I shall be! you will see how neatly your room will be kept. I am a perfect pink of nicety; and if you wish to dine by yourself on Sundays, I will cook the good things which you purchase."

"It will be very convenient to have you superintend my housekeeping, Madam Pipelet. To-morrow I will bring my furniture, and will come myself to see it put in order."

Rodolphe now departed. The results of his visit to the house in the rue du Temple had proved very important, both for the solution of the mystery which he was desirous of penetrating, and for the noble zeal with which he sought occasion to reward the good and punish the bad. The results were these:

Mademoiselle Rigolette must necessarily know the new abode of the Schoolmaster's son, François Germain;

A young female who, according to appearances, might be the Marchioness d'Harville, had made for the following day an appointment with the Commander, which might be the consummation of her ruin. For a thousand reasons Rodolphe felt the most vital interest for M. d'Harville, whose repose and honor appeared to be so cruelly compromised;

An artisan, honest and laborious, but worn down by the most frightful misery, was about to be thrown into the streets by the agent of Bras-rouge;

He had also involuntarily discovered some traces of an adventure, in which the charlatan, Cesar Bradamanti, and some lady connected with the fashionable world, were the principal actors;

He had discovered in addition, that Chouette, recently emerged from the hospital, whither she had been sent after the scene in the alley of Veuves, had suspicious interviews with Madam Burette, the *devineresse* and pawnbroker, who occupied the second floor.

Having arranged in his mind this various information, Rodolphe returned to his own house in the rue Plumet, deferring until to-morrow his visit to the house of Jacques Ferrand, the notary. To-night, as it is known, Rodolphe was to be present at the grand ball at the embassy of——.

Having to follow our hero on this novel excursion, we will cast a retrospective glance toward Tom and Sarah, two important personages in this history.

CHAPTER IX..... TOM AND SARAH.

Sarah Seyton, the relict of Count McGregor, was about thirty-seven or eight years of age, descended from an excellent Scottish family, the daughter of a country gentleman with the rank of Baronet. Of most surpassing beauty, an orphan of sixteen years of age, Sarah had left Scotland in company with her brother, Tom Seyton of Halsbury. The absurd predictions of a Highland soothsayer, her own nurse, had inflamed almost to frenzy the two predominating vices of Sarah's character, pride and ambition; and she promised herself, with an incredible strength of conviction, the most illustrious distinction, even the diadem of a queen. The young Scottish lady, confiding in these predictions, exerted all her powers without intermission to verify her ambitious faith. In like manner, a devineresse once promised a crown to the beautiful and accomplished West Indian, who one day seated herself on the throne of France, and distinguished the queenly purple as much by her virtue and her excellence, as others had done by their grandeur and their majesty. By a singular coincidence, Tom Seyton, as superstitious as his sister, encouraged her in her sanguine folly, and had resolved to devote his life to the realization of a dream, so senseless and deceitful. The brother and sister did not construe so rigorously the prediction of the Highlandress, as absolutely to aim at a throne of the first class, in magnificent disdain of secondary royalties and paramount princedoms: no, provided the Scottish beauty could encircle her haughty brow with a sovereign crown, the ambitious couple would close their eyes to the extent of dominion which appertained to it.

With the aid of the Almanac of Gotha, for the year of our Lord 1819, Tom Seyton, before leaving Scotland, arranged a synoptical catalogue of all the marriageable kings and sovereigns of Europe, in the order of their age. Although very absurd and aspiring, the plans of the ambitious twain were too elevated to stoop to dishonor. Tom was to assist his sister in weaving the matrimonial web which was to entangle a crowned head. He was to aid in all the ruses and stratagems, which might facilitate such a result; but he would have slain her with his own hand, rather than have permitted her to sustain any less honorable relation than that of the legal wife of her royal spouse.

The inventory which resulted from their researches into the Almanac of Gotha, was very satisfactory. The German Confederation furnished the largest number of young presumptive sovereigns. Tom was not ignorant of a kind of marriage prevailing in Germany, which, though clandestine, was perfectly legitimate, and to which he was willing to submit, for the sake of his sister. They therefore determined to visit Germany, in order to commence the chase. If this project appears improbable, these hopes irrational, we can only reply, that a romantic ambition, stimulated by a superstitious belief, is never daunted by the unreasonableness of its expectations; and that such a character seldom undertakes any enterprise, but one which seems to other minds chimerical. If we recur to events which have happened in our own times—the frequent, solemn, and

respectable marriages between sovereigns and their subjects; if we recall even the love adventure of Miss Penelope and the Prince of Capona, we cannot regard the anticipations of Tom and Sarah as entirely preposterous. We must add, that the adventurous female united to exquisite beauty every accomplishment of mind, every fascination of manner; and that these charms were more dangerous, because she concealed a cool and designing soul, an adroit and wicked mind, a perfect power of dissimulation, and the most obstinate and imperious disposition, under the appearance of a generous, confiding, ardent, and passionate nature. Her personal appearance was as deceitful an index of her true character, as her mental manifestations. Her large dark eyes, beneath brows of raven blackness, could at her will flash with brilliancy, float in languor, or glow with voluptuousness; while the heart beneath, never visited by the warm aspirations of love, was frozen by a cold and selfish spirit of calculation, which no surprise of the passions or the senses could ever disturb.

Upon her arrival on the Continent, Sarah, in pursuance of her brother's advice, did not design to commence her enterprise until she had resided for some time in Paris, in order to perfect her education, and soften down her English austerity, by intercourse with a society distinguished for its elegance, its polish, its freedom, and its taste. Under the auspices of the British embassadress and the late Marquis d'Harville, who had been acquainted with her father, she was immediately introduced into the highest and most select circles. Persons of cold, artful, and designing minds, can assume, with wonderful facility, language and manners which are the most directly at variance with their disposition. With them, all is on the surface, glitter and tinsel. A discerning eye is fatal to their fascinating powers: they, therefore, cultivate that sort of conversation and manner which is most useful for the purposes of moral disguise; and they acquire the art of assuming or changing their mask, with the rapidity and ease of an accomplished comedian. After a six months' residence in the French capital, the Scottish beauty could have contended with the most thoroughly Parisian lady for the palm for piquancy of wit, sprightliness of conversation, ingenious coquetry, and that bewitching art of manner which blends into such an exciting unison the chaste and the voluptuous. Tom, perceiving that his sister had arrived at the maturity of all her charms, accompanied her to Germany, furnished with most excellent letters of introduction. The first state in their route, was the Grand Duchy of Gerolstein, thus described in the infallible Almanac of Gotha, for the year 1819:

GENEALOGY OF THE SOVEREIGNS OF EUROPE AND THEIR FAMILIES.

GEROLSTEIN.

Grand Duke MAXIMILIAN RODOLPHE, born on the 10th day of December, 1764; succeeds his father, CHARLES FREDERICK RODOLPHE, on the 21st day of April, 1785; widower, January, 1808, of LOUISE, daughter of Prince JOHN AUGUSTUS DE BURGLEN.

SON.

GUSTAVUS RODOLPHE, born April 17th, 1803.

MOTHER.

Grand Duchess JUDITH, dowager widow of the Grand Duke CHARLES FREDERICK RODOLPHE, April 21st, 1785.

With excellent sense, Tom had inscribed at the head of his catalogue of destined brothers-in-law, the youngest princes who were eligible; thinking that the ardor of youth would be more readily entrapped than the coolness of age. Besides, as we have before said, the intriguing twain had been particularly recommended to the reigning Grand Duke of Gerolstein, by the old Marquis d'Harville, bewitched, like every one else, by the beauty, grace, and charming affectations of Sarah. It is useless to state, that the heir apparent to the Grand Duchy of Gerolstein was Gustavus Rodolphe, at this time hardly eighteen years of age. The arrival of the Scottish beauty was quite an event in that small and retired German court, simple, quiet, almost patriarchal in its character. The Grand Duke, the most excellent of rulers, governed his duchy with almost paternal kindness. No principality had more completely within itself all the physical and moral accessories of happiness; and its sober, industrious, and pious people, were an ideal type of the German character. They were so perfectly contented with their condition, that the enlightened solicitude of the Grand Duke had but little to do in restraining them from the mania for constitutional reform. The Grand Duke himself inquired into all the modern discoveries and benevolent projects, designed to improve and meliorate the condition of a people, and incessantly applied them for the benefit of his own. His ministers at the different courts of Europe, had no other employment than to keep their master informed of the progress of science in the department of political economy and public utility.

We have said before, that the Grand Duke was the most grateful and affectionate friend of the Marquis d'Harville; and, owing to his commendation, the Seytons of Halsbury were received with the most distinguished civility and kindness at the court of Gerolstein. A fortnight's residence was sufficient for a mind so penetrating as Sarah's, to fathom a character so virtuous and candid as the Grand Duke's; and she had wisely determined to secure the good-will of the father, before bringing her powers of fascination to bear upon the son. For that child he entertained so tender a regard, that Sarah for some time believed that he would consent to a *mesalliance*, rather than jeopardize the happiness of the prince; but she was soon convinced, that, with all his affection, he would never depart from certain principles, certain fixed ideas, respecting the duties and obligations of those of royal blood. It was not, with him, a matter of pride, but of conscience, reason, and self-respect; and with a man of his earnest temperament, firm and resolute as he was affectionate and kind, such convictions are always unchangeable. Encountering such obstacles in the character of the father, she was on the point of relinquishing her meditated designs upon the son, had she not discovered in Rodolphe, (according to the general report,) mildness, amiability, thoughtfulness, and modesty; which appearing to her as timidity and irresolution, would compensate, as she thought, for the inflexible firmness of the Grand Duke. She therefore persisted in her projects and her hopes. The conduct of both of the adventurers evinced the highest degree of tact and skill. The young lady succeeded in winning the hearts of all, and applied her powers of interesting the affections, especially to those who might be jealous of her superiority. She caused her enviable beauty and grace to be forgotten, by hiding both under a veil of assumed simplicity. She soon became the idol, not only of the Grand Duke, but also of his mother, the dowager Duchess Judith, who retained, at ninety years of age, her fondness for the young and the agreeable. Several times the adventurers threw out hints about their departure, but the Grand Duke absolutely refused his sanction: he solicited the baronet to accept the situation of first equerry, which was then vacant; and urged his sister, out of charity, not to forsake the Grand Duchess, who would not survive her absence. After a long hesitation, the brilliant proposals were accepted; and the brother and sister became permanently established at Gerolstein, two months after their arrival.

Sarah was an excellent musician; and becoming aware of the partiality of the Grand Duchess for the old masters, and particularly for the compositions of Gluck, she sent for the works of that celebrated man, and fascinated the old princess by her accommodating disposition, and by the admirable skill with which she executed those ancient ballads, of such simple and expressive beauty. Tom proved himself very serviceable in the office with which the Grand Duke had intrusted him. The Scotchman was an admirable judge of horses; he had much ardor and determination, and he soon reformed entirely the stables of the Grand Duke, which had suffered much from negligence. The brother and sister, were soon equally loved at the court; the partiality of the master influenced that of all the subordinates. Sarah was in too much need of allies for her future projects, to neglect any opportunity of securing a partisan. Her hypocrisy, veiled in the most attractive forms, easily imposed upon the loyal German ladies; and a general affection for her, soon ratified the approbation of the Grand Duchess.

The ambitious couple were now honorably established at the court of Gerolstein, and yet no mention has been made of Rodolphe. The Prince, a few days before the arrival of Sarah, had departed with an aid-de-camp, and the faithful Murph, to inspect some troops. This absence was very fortunate for the views of the adventuress; for it enabled her to preoccupy those, principally interested in her schemes, without being disturbed by the presence of the young man, whose sudden admiration might have awakened the jealousy of the Grand Duke. It had not yet occurred to his Highness, that he had admitted to his intimacy a female of rare beauty and fascinating qualities, whom Rodolphe must necessarily meet every hour of the day. She remained entirely unmoved by the noble display of confidence by which she had been introduced into the very family of a sovereign. The aspiring twain recoiled not for a moment from their determination to spread sorrow and dissension through a peaceful and happy court; but they coolly calculated the advantage to themselves, of the discord which would soon be produced between a father and a son, who were now so tenderly attached to each other.

CHAPTER IX.

SIR WALTER MURPH AND THE ABBE POLIDORI.

Rodolphe, during his childhood, had been of a very delicate constitution. His father had adopted a course of treatment founded upon the following reasons, which, though apparently singular, will be found to be judicious. The English country gentlemen are generally distinguished for robust health. This circumstance may be deduced in a great measure, from their active, hardy and rural physical education; developing strength and vigor. "I must take Rodolphe," said he, "from the hands of female nurses, and by accustoming him to live like the son of an English farmer, fortify the delicacy of his phisique." The Grand Duke, therefore, sent to England for some worthy man, capable of superintending the discipline of his son in the manner prescribed. Sir Walter Murph, an athletic specimen of the Yorkshire country gentleman, was intrusted with this important charge. The direction which he gave to the young Prince's exercise, corresponded precisely with the views of the Grand Duke. Murph and his pupil lived for several years on a delightful farm, surrounded by woods, in a most healthy and picturesque situation, about a league from the city of Gerolstein. Free from all the restraints of etiquette, he employed himself with Murph in agricultural labors, adapted to his years; in the regular, sober and active pursuits of a country life; finding his only amusements in wrestling, pugilistic exercise, riding and the chase.

The pure air of the fields, the woods, and the mountains, transformed the sickly boy into a vigorous youth; the pale cheek was supplanted by the brilliant flush of health, and although always slender and nervous, he soon became equal to the greatest fatigue; and supplying by skill, energy, and courage, a deficiency of muscle, was able to buffet in playful combat, youths of more advanced age than himself. It was in this manner that he passed his life until his sixteenth or seventeenth year. His mental education, was necessarily somewhat neglected during this physical training. Rodolphe had studied but little, for the Grand Duke wisely concluded that a mind from which much is required, must be sustained by a strong physical organization; and that it is only by such an alliance that the intellectual faculties, slowly improved by education, can produce great results. The excellent Murph was himself but little learned; he could only impart to his pupil the primary elements of knowledge; but no man better than himself could inspire him with contempt for what is low, base, and degrading. The elevated principles implanted by the admonitions of his unlearned instructor, rooted themselves deeply in Rodolphe's mind; and though afterward shaken by the storm of passion, were never torn from his heart. The lightning may strike and shatter a tree; but if it is firmly planted in the soil, the sap will still ascend, and a thousand green boughs will sprout from its scathed and splintered trunk. Murph may be said to have given to Rodolphe the health of his body and his soul; he made him robust, active, and bold; he inspired him with a sympathy for what is excellent and right; an antipathy to what is wicked and wrong. Having admirably accomplished his task, he returned to England, called there by some weighty matters of his own. Rodolphe sincerely regretted his absence, for he was tenderly attached to him. It was the intention of Murph to settle permanently at Gerolstein with his family, after he had arranged important interests of his own. He did not anticipate being absent from Germany more than one year.

A certain Cesar Polidori, a celebrated philosopher, a distinguished physician, a learned historian, and a perfect master of all the exact sciences, was charged with the cultivation and fertilization of the soil, which had been so thoroughly prepared by Murph. This last selection of the Grand Duke was a very unfortunate one, or rather he was grossly deceived by the person who introduced the Abbé to him, and induced him to accept a Catholic priest as a tutor for a Protestant Prince. This departure from the established usage was regarded by many as ominous of evil to the young Prince. As far as the example and the character of the Abbé were concerned, the presentiment was verified by the result. He was impious, false, and hypocritical; a sacrilegious sneerer at all that is considered the most sacred by the rest of men; filled with cunning and adroitness; concealing the most frightful skepticism, the most dangerous immorality, beneath a pious exterior; assuming the most abject, Christian humility, in order to veil his Jesuitical flexibility of conscience, in the same manner that he affected the most expansive benevolence, and the extremest charity, to disguise the perfidy of his interested flatteries. Knowing mankind thoroughly, or rather intimately conversant with the darkest side, and the most debased passions of the human character; a Mentor more detestable than the Abbé Polidori, could not possibly have been assigned to a young man. Rodolphe, who had forsaken with the strongest regret the free and animated existence he had enjoyed with Murph, was unprepared for the severe discipline of study, and the ceremonious usages of his father's court. From the very first interview, he regarded the Abbé with great aversion. How could it be otherwise! In leaving his pupil, Murph had compared him to a young wild colt, snatched from the meadows over which he had raced in all the exuberance of life, to be restrained by the bit and goaded by the spur, to moderate the speed with which he had flown over the fields to the paces of the manege; and to subject the strength which he had hitherto employed in leaping and bounding, according to his own caprice, to the utility and the service of man. Rodolphe began by informing the Abbé that he felt no inclination for study; that he needed, first of all, the free exercise of his arms and limbs; to inhale the fresh air of the country; to race through the woods and the mountains; that a good gun and a spirited horse were preferable to all the books in the world.

The priest replied, "that there was indeed nothing more wearisome than study, that there was nothing more contemptible than the pleasures which he preferred to it; only suited," he said, "to the most stupid German farmer." And with this, the Abbe commenced a description so laughable, so sarcastic, of the simple and rural existence which had delighted his pupil, that Rodolphe, was for the first time, ashamed of his taste and distrustful of his happiness. He artlessly inquired of the priest, "in what manner a person excluded from the simple pleasures of the country and the chase, and disgusted with study, could possibly employ his time!" The Abbe answered mysteriously, that "he would inform him at some future day." The ambitious views of the priest, though pointing in a different direction, were as strong and sanguine as those of the Scottish beauty herself. Although the Duchy of Gerolstein was but a secondary state, the Abbe aspired to be one day its Richelieu, and to educate Rodolphe as a sort of Prince Faineant—a mere representative of the sovereignty. He began, therefore, by trying to ingratiate himself with his pupil, and by great condescention and obsequiousness, to banish from Rodolphe's mind all recollection of Murph. Rodolphe persisted in his dislike of the sciences; but the artful priest concealed from the Grand Duke the repugnance of the Prince to study, and daily praised his assiduity and progress; and a few questions and answers, which had been prepared beforehand by the preceptor and pupil, confirmed the Grand Duke, not very learned himself, in the impression which the Abbé had falsely produced upon his mind. The aversion with which the priest had at first inspired Rodolphe, gradually subsided into a gay familiarity, a very poor substitute for the warm attachment with which he regarded Murph. Led by that sort of tie which connects together accomplices in any stratagem, the prince lapsed into a confidential intimacy with his instructor; an intimacy which must inevitably terminate in contempt for the character of a man who was not prevented by his age and sacred character, from basely lying in order to palliate his pupil's idleness. The Abbe was aware that such would be the result; but he was likewise aware, that if an individual does not at once turn away from a corrupt being in disgust, that the charm of wit and the polish of manner would so soften the descent to vice, that by degrees the mind would have a relish for sentiments from which it lately turned with disgust, and learn to sneer and villify what it always before regarded with veneration. The Abbe was also too artful to attack directly some elevated principle implanted in his mind by the monitions of Murph, but his approaches were most guarded and gradual. After having inspired him with indifference to his rural mode of life, he redoubled his sarcasms upon its meanness and vulgarity; then half raising the mask of his own austerity, he would pique the curiosity of his pupil, with partial confidances and dim revelations, of the enchanting manner in which certain of his ancestral princes passed their delightful existence. After the most careful approaches, preparatory hints and infinite management, the Abbé ventured a sneer at the dull and stupid ceremonial of the present Grand Duke's court. He finally played so skilfully upon the curiosity of Rodolphe, and inflamed his imagination to such a degree, as to force from him an entreaty to be more precise and particular in his delineations. The priest would then launch forth into exaggerated and highly-colored delineations of the voluptuous pleasures—of the delightful amours which distinguished the reign of Louis XIV., of the Regent, and particularly of Louis XV., the hero of Cesar Polidori. He affirmed to the poor enfant, who drank in his words with fatal avidity, that licentiousness, though carried to the greatest extent, so far from degrading a prince, naturally well endowed, actually ennobles him; that it softens his heart and quickens his geno-

rosity; for this reason, that the consciousness of happiness, always predisposes noble hearts to benevolent feelings and magnanimous actions; and he adduced Louis XV. as an irresistible illustration of the truth of his position; in addition to whom, "how many," said the Abbé, "of the most distinguished heroes of ancient and modern times, have cultivated a refined epicureanism, from Alcibiades to Maurice of Saxony, from Antony to the great Condé, from Cæsar to Vendome." How demoralizing were such descriptions to a young, ardent, and innocent soul! The Abbé would translate into most eloquent language the polished measure of Horace's Odes, in which that rare genius presents, in its most seductive phase, the soft delight of an existence rapt in a refined sensuality, and languished away on the bosom of love. Yet, occasionally, the Abbé would gently allude to the danger of such theories; and to gratify what there was elevated in Rodolphe's character, would lull the senses into repose by vivid pictures of a more spiritual Utopia. He would say, "that a prince intelligently voluptuous, might improve mankind by increasing their pleasures; might develope their more exalted instincts by ministering to their enjoyments; and inspire the most skeptical with the religious sentiment, by distributing with a lavish hand the means of gratification, and directing their gratitude for it to the Deity." To inhale with the most greedy enjoyment every source of delight; to task, even to satiety, the senses with pleasure; to bathe the soul in rapture, was, according to the Abbé, to glorify God in the munificence and infinity of his bounties. Such instructions could not but produce their legitimate results. In the midst of a sober and virtuous court, habituated, by the example of the sovereign, to the most tranquil pleasures and the most harmless amusements; the excited imagination of the young Prince was dreaming of the Paphian nights at Versailles, of the insane orgies of Choisy, of the unrestrained voluptuousness of Parc-aux-cerfs; and occasionally, by way of contrast, indulging a vision of romantic love.

The Abbé had not failed to demonstrate to Rodolphe that a Prince of the German Confederation, could have no other military pretension than to send his contingent quota to the Diet. Besides, the spirit of the age was not for war. To have life flow on in a delicious current, basking in the smile of beauty, fanned by the refinements of luxury; alternating between the intoxication of sensual pleasures, and the delightful inspiration of the arts; to engage at times in the excitement of the chase—not as a wild Nimrod, but as an intelligent epicure, who solicited light fatigue in order to enhance the rapture of indolence and repose; such, according to the Abbé, was the only rational mode of life for a prince who could find a prime minister willing and capable of bearing, on his own shoulders, the heavy burden of state affairs. Rodolphe had determined in his own mind—indulging an anticipation which was only saved from being criminal by the fact that it was inevitable—upon his father's death, to surrender himself to that life which the Abbé Polidori had sketched in such glowing colors, and intrust the duties of government to his faithful Mentor. We must repeat, that Rodolphe tenderly loved his father, and would have deplored his death, although the palace of Sardanapalus would be thrown open to him thereby. He wrapped in the most profound secrecy the selfish anticipation which was fomenting within him. Rodolphe was aware that the favorite ideals of the Grand Duke were Gustavus Adolphus, Charles XII., and Frederick the Great; for his family were nearly connected with the House of Brandenburg. The young Prince was conscious that an admiration for these royal captains—these booted and spurred warriors, whose passion was combat—would yield but little sympathy to the soft and languid mode of existence which he had proposed to himself; and that his father would regard his son as already ruined, if he thought him capable of supplanting the Teutonic gravity by the lax and licentious manners of the regency.

Eighteen months had now passed, and Murph had not yet returned, although he had announced his intended arrival. The first repugnance once conquered by the obsequious attentions of the Abbé, Rodolphe improved the scientific instructions of his preceptor, and although not furnished with a very thorough education, he gained at least some superficial knowledge which, joined to a mind naturally quick and sagacious, enabled him to pass for a well-informed man, and to reflect great honor upon his instructor. Murph returned from England, and wept for joy while embracing his former pupil. But after a few days, without being able to penetrate the reason, he thought that he discovered in Rodolphe a coldness and distance toward him, with which he was deeply afflicted; and almost a satirical spirit when he recalled to his mind the enjoyments of their rural life. Assured, as Murph was, of the natural amiability of the young Prince's disposition, a secret premonition suggested to him, that nothing but the pernicious influence of his instructor could account for its perversion. For the Abbé Polidori, the worthy Englishman had a sort of natural antipathy; and he determined to subject the conduct of the Italian priest to a most severe scrutiny. On the other hand, the priest was excessively annoyed by the return of Murph, whose frankness, good sense and penetration, he held in great dread; and who he supposed would interfere with the sole object of his mind—the corruption of Rodolphe.

It was about this time that Tom and Sarah were presented, and welcomed with such great distinction, at the court of Gerolstein. A short time before their arrival, Rodolphe, with an aide-de-camp and Murph, had left, as we have said, for the purpose of inspecting the condition of several garrisons. As that journey was entirely of a military character, the Grand Duke thought there was no necessity of having the Abbé attached to his suit. The priest, with much regret, saw Murph in possession of the situation he was himself desirous of monopolizing. The Squire relied much upon this opportunity, to enlighten himself as to the cause of Rodolphe's coldness, and to regain an interest in his affections; but the young Prince had, unfortunately, already learned the art of dissimulation. He believed it dangerous to suffer his former protector to penetrate his mind, or to discover his future designs. He affected a charming cordiality toward Murph; and expressed regrets for the rural pleasures of his childhood, with so much apparent sincerity, as almost entirely to restore to Murph his confidence in him. We say *almost*, for the warmth of Murph's interest inspired him with an unnatural insight; and in spite of Rodolphe's assurances of affection, he could not banish the suspicion, that there was no longer an unreserved confidence between them; he attempted, in vain, to satisfy his doubts, for the precocious duplicity of the young Prince defeated his efforts.

During this journey, the Abbé had not been idle. Some affinity, or some mysterious sign, makes intriguing people acquainted with each other, and they are thus always prepared to form an alliance, or to declare war. A few days after the establishment of Sarah and her brother at the Grand Duke's court, Tom and the Abbé were observed to be particularly intimate. The priest was conscious of a natural, almost involuntary attraction toward the wicked and designing; and without positively discerning their project, he found himself drawn toward Tom and Sarah by too active a sympathy, to doubt for a moment, that their purposes were, in some way, kindred to his own. A few questions which Tom Seyton asked, about the disposition and character of Rodolphe, were sufficient to enlighten the already awakened suspicions of the Abbé, as to the designs of the visitors; although at the time, he thought that the young beauty might stoop to a dishonored coronet. By the arrival of this charming female, the Abbé's projects were furnished with an unexpected ally. Rodolphe's imagination was already inflamed with the exaggerated raptures of love; and he had now presented to him the ravishing reality of his dreams! Before the taste becomes fastidious, thought the Abbé, before the appetite becomes delicate, by long experience in pleasure, a single and romantic attachment most usually enslaves the mind; such was the influence of Marie Maucini over Louis XIV., and of Rosette d'Arcy over Louis XV. Rodolphe must yield, reasoned the Abbé, to a similar power; must be subdued by the enchantment of a first love. To direct and control this passion, to use it for the advancement of his own ambitious designs, and for the ruin of Murph's interest, became now the settled determination of the Abbé. He soon made known to the aspiring couple, that they would be powerless without his coöperation; that he alone was responsible to the Grand Duke for the private life of the young Prince. He also intimated, that the influence of Murph, coarse, rough, and a slave to vulgar prejudices, would be detrimental to their interests; and that, far from excusing or tolerating the charming peccadillos of youth, his dogged honesty would arouse the severe morality of the Grand Duke. Tom and Sarah, without fully admitting the Abbé to their confidence, were too sagacious to neglect the hints which he had thrown out; and the three, united by a common interest, formed a silent league against Murph, their unyielding enemy.

CHAPTER XI. ..... A FIRST LOVE.

What an ordinary sagacity might have foreseen, actually occurred. Daily intercourse with Sarah inspired Rodolphe with a passionate attachment for her, and he soon drew from her yielding heart, the confession that his emotions were reciprocated: although she foresaw, as she said, only a miserable futurity in the love of two beings, between whom there was such a

disparity in rank. She therefore recommended the greatest discretion to Rodolphe, in order not to alarm the suspicions of the Grand Duke, whose prejudices would be found inexorable, and who would deprive them of all that rendered life endurable; the pleasure of daily and confidential intercourse. The young Prince was equally well convinced of the necessity of dissimulation. The prudence of his beloved was a new claim upon his admiration; and the secret of their mutual passion, was, for some time, faithfully kept. When the brother and sister perceived that the infatuation of Rodolphe had reached its crisis, that the difficulty of disguising his raptures daily increased, and that a denouement might be expected at any moment; they brought their intrigue to its consummation. As the character of the priest justified the confidence, Tom disclosed to the Abbé the necessity of a marriage between Rodolphe and his sister, or they would be compelled immediately to depart from Gerolstein; for the affection of his sister to the Prince was jeopardizing her happiness, and, as he feared, her virtue also, although he was confident that she would prefer death to dishonor. Pretensions so aspiring and arrogant, took even the priest by surprise. He had never supposed that Sarah could dream of becoming the bride of his Highness; of surmounting all the obstacles of birth, rank and proscription, which divided them; and he frankly stated to Tom, the reasons why the Grand Duke would never consent to such an alliance. Tom assented to the views of the Abbé, and admitted their importance; but suggested as a compromise, which would reconcile all the difficulties, a private marriage, valid in form, but only to be declared after the death of the reigning Duke. Sarah was herself descended from an ancient and noble family, and marriages of such a character were not wanting in precedents. Tom gave the Abbé, and through him the Prince, eight days to decide. His sister, he said, could no longer support the anguish of uncertainty. If she was forced to renounce her love for the Prince, the painful struggle must be immediately commenced, or her peace of mind would be destroyed for ever. In order that a motive should not be wanting for a sudden departure, Tom had taken the precaution to address a letter to a friend in England, which was to be mailed in London, and thus returned to Germany, which would contain reasons sufficiently strong, to require an immediate departure from Gerolstein.

For once, at least, the priest aided by his bad opinion of mankind, discerned the truth. Always searching for a bad motive in the most sincere professions, when he discovered that a legitimate marriage was the object of Sarah, he regarded it, not as a proof of virtue, but of ambition. He would have scarcely believed in the sincerity of her love for Rodolphe, even if she had sacrificed to it her honor; for, according to the Abbé's creed, a passion which was influenced by any prudential considerations, was unworthy of that name; it was but a weak and feeble love, said he, which would not sacrifice both earth and heaven for its gratification. The Abbé, confident as he was in the correctness of his views, was still perplexed by the apparently reasonable and disinterested alternative which Tom proposed. What did he demand? A legitimate marriage, or a final separation of the parties. In spite of his impudence, the Abbé did not dare to express any distrust of Tom's candor, in proposing this alternative. He did not dare to tell him, that by skilful manœuvering, he and his sister had succeeded in interesting the affections of the Prince to such a degree, that a disreputable wedlock was almost inevitable.

Three different modes of procedure, suggested themselves for the Abbe's selfishness to adopt:

To inform the Grand Duke of the matrimonial plot;

To open Rodolphe's mind to the intriguing spirit of Tom and his sister;

Or to cooperate with them in advancing the marriage.

To inform the Grand Duke, would be to alienate for ever the heir apparent of the crown from his faithful Mentor and future prime minister.

To attempt to enlighten Rodolphe, as to the interested views of his idol, would be to expose himself to the hatred with which lovers always visit those who disparage their beloved; and it would also inflict a terrible blow, not only upon the Prince's heart, but also upon his vanity, to inform him that it was his sovereign rank alone, which had captivated this distinguished belle. Besides, could he himself any longer affect austerity of character, and purity of principle, with any degree of consistency, while censuring a young female for the only conduct that was consistent with her innocence and virtue?

By promoting the marriage, on the other hand, the Abbé would attach his future sovereigns to himself by the strong obligations of gratitude; or, at least, by that tie which connects those who have participated in some common act of danger.

It was true that the marriage might be discovered, and the wrath of the Grand Duke be poured on his head; but the deed would then have been accomplished, the union would be binding, and the future monarch of Gerolstein would be under a still deeper obligation to the Abbe for having suffered in his behalf. After mature deliberation, the Abbe determined to yield his assistance to the designs of Tom and his sister; but upon certain conditions, to which we shall hereafter allude. Rodolphe's passion had now reached its culminating point; inflamed, moreover, by the artful stratagems and feigned affliction of Sarah, who affected to be more distressed than himself, at the insurmountable obstacles with which duty and honor impeded their felicity. The Prince was on the point of declaring his love for the Scottish beauty to the Grand Duke his father. It must be remembered, that it was his first love—a love as artless and confiding, as it was ardent and passionate—to excite which, Sarah had exhausted all the resources of the most enticing coquetry. Never had the virgin emotions of a young, warm, and imaginative mind, been more skilfully, or for a longer period, played upon. Never was a woman more dangerously attractive than Sarah. By turns, playful and melancholy, cold and passionate, forward and retiring; her full black eyes, burning or languishing, kindled in the excited soul of Rodolphe an unquenchable flame. When the Abbé proposed to him the alternative of relinquishing for ever the bewitching girl, or uniting himself with her by a private marriage; the young man fell upon the neck of the priest, and proclaimed him his father, his saviour; and had an authorized functionary been present, he would have concluded the ceremony instantly. The Abbé wished, for reasons of his own, to take charge of everything himself. He provided a clergyman and a witness, and the marriage (with all its formalities, revised and verified by Tom,) was consecrated, during a short absence of the Grand Duke at a convocation of the German Diet.

The predictions of the Highland soothsayer were fulfilled. Sarah was married to the heir of a crown.

Marriage, without impairing the ardor of Rodolphe's love, increased his caution, and calmed that agitation, which, at one time, had almost betrayed the secret. The young couple, by the assistance of the Abbe, were so guarded in their interviews, and reserved in their intercourse, as effectually to disguise their relation to each other. During the first three months of his marriage, Rodolphe was the happiest of mankind; and when reflection had moderated his transports, and he viewed calmly his situation, he did not for a moment regret that he had bound himself to Sarah by an indissoluble tie. He relinquished, without a murmur, the life of gallantry and effeminacy which had at first bewildered his imagination. He was determined to devote himself to the happiness of his wife; and her form mingled with all the hopes with which he contemplated the future. The importance of the Abbé as his prime minister, diminished gradually, as he extended his thoughts to the actual possession of the throne. Within her own mind, Sarah was assuming for herself the sole administration of government; for her disposition was so imperious and domineering, that she expected to reign in the place of Rodolphe.

An event, impatiently awaited by Sarah, soon changed this calm into a storm. She was about to become a mother. It was now that she began to manifest traits which were as novel as they were repulsive to Rodolphe. She insisted that she could no longer live surrounded by a thousand restraints, which were rendered more distressing by her peculiar and delicate situation. In this extremity, she boldly proposed to Rodolphe, to acknowledge the marriage to the Grand Duke, who, like the Duchess dowager, had daily become more and more attached to Sarah. "He will doubtless at first," continued she, "be highly enraged; but he is so tenderly attached to you, so affectionately to me, that paternal wrath will be gradually appeased, and I shall be able to assume that rank at the court upon which I have a double claim; for I am about to give birth to an heir presumptive of the dukedom." The boldness of this pretension frightened Rodolphe: he was well convinced of the deep affection with which his father regarded him, but also knew the inflexibility of his prejudices, respecting the marriage of princes. To every objection which he urged, Sarah replied:

"I am your wife before God and before man: within a few days, the peculiarity of my situation can no longer be concealed. Will you compel me to blush for a crime of which I am innocent; to be spurned for a condition for which I should be honored; to be exposed to cruelty when I have the most need of kindness?"

The consciousness of paternity had bound Rodolphe to Sarah by ties, compared to which all others were feeble; and between his earnest desire to gratify her slightest wish, and the fear of his father's indignation, his heart was tortured with anxiety.

Tom agreed with his sister. "The marriage is indissoluble," said he, to his most serene brother; "the Grand Duke may exile you with your wife from his court, but he can do no more; and the probability is, that his affection for you would prevent such a measure, and he will finally conclude to tolerate what cannot be remedied."

However plausible these views were, they did not soothe the anxiety of Rodolphe. About this time, Tom was ordered by the Grand Duke to visit several *haras** in Austria. He was compelled to depart, as the mission could not be declined, and although he would be detained but two weeks, he set out with great regret, at a period so decisive of his sister's destiny as the present. Sarah viewed his departure with mingled satisfaction and regret; she would lose the benefit of his advice, but in the case of a denouement, he would be sheltered from the wrath of the Grand Duke. It was arranged that Sarah should inform him daily of the progress of events; and in order that their correspondence might be more secret, they agreed upon certain signs. This precaution alone was enough to indicate, that she had thoughts to communicate which were not suitable for Rodolphe's eye. Her cold, selfish, ambitious heart, had never for a moment been touched by the passion which she had inspired; and she regarded her present situation in no other light than as an additional hold on Rodolphe's regards; his infatuation inspired her with no interest, and in her private conferences with her brother, she spoke with scorn and bitterness of the weakness of a prince, who trembled before the most affectionate as well as the most long-lived of fathers. In one word, their correspondence revealed their interested selfishness, their ambitious calculations, their unfeeling prayers for the Grand Duke's death; in short, all the secret springs of the machination which was consummated by the marriage of Rodolphe. A few days after the departure of Tom, Sarah visited the Grand Duchess in her own apartments, and was met with suspicious glances and insinuating whispers from many of the ladies. The Duchess, although ninety years of age, had a keen ear, and the inuendoes of her retinue did not escape her; and calling one of the ladies in attendance, she learned from her the cause of their insinuations. The old Princess almost worshipped her protegé, and was ready to vouch before God, as to the purity of Sarah. Indignant at the malice of these remarks, the old lady shrugged her shoulders; and from the end of the room where she was seated, she addressed Sarah in in a loud voice:

"My dear Sarah, come to me."

It was necessary to pass through the entire circle of ladies in order to reach the Princess, whose benevolent intention was, to silence the calumniators by such a severe ordeal. Sarah went toward her protectress, and the profound respect which all present felt for the Grand Duchess, was necessary to suppress a murmur of surprise and indignation, as the young lady passed through the circle. The least clear-sighted were able to discern what Sarah no longer wished to conceal; for she had herself contrived this scene, in order to force from Rodolphe an acknowledgment of the marriage.

The Grand Duchess, unwilling to yield to such strong evidence, whispered to Sarah: "My dear child, you are dressed in very bad taste to-day; your garment does not do justice to your figure."

* * * * * * *

We will relate in another place the result of this discovery, productive of great and terrible events. We will now tell our readers, what we presume before this they have conjectured, that Fleur de Marie was the offspring of this unhappy marriage, and that both Rodolphe and Sarah supposed that she was dead.

* * * * * * *

The reader will not have forgotten that Rodolphe, after visiting the house in the rue du Temple, had returned to his own mansion, and that he was to attend this same evening a ball given by the embassadress of ——.

To that ball we will now follow his Highness Gustavus Rodolphe, Grand Duke regnant of Gerolstein, now sojourning in France under the name and title of Count de Duren.

CHAPTER XII..... THE BALL.

At eleven o'clock in the evening, a Swiss dressed in splendid livery, opened the door of a mansion in the rue Plumet, that a magnificent blue Berlin might pass out, drawn by two large and superb gray horses. On the seat, trimmed with silk fringe, an enormous coachman was seated, rendered still more enormous by a large blue overcoat with large falling capes, bordered with silver, and covered with frogs. Behind the carriage, a gigantic footman, powdered and dressed in blue and yellow livery with silver trimmings, stood by the side of a chasseur with formidable mustaches, adorned like a drum-major with gold lace, and with his hat partially concealed by a bunch of blue and yellow plumes. The lamps threw a vivid light into the satin-lined carriage, and Rodolphe could be discerned, seated with the Baron de Graün at his left, and the faithful Murph opposite him. Through deference to the sovereign, the ball of whose embassador his Highness was about to grace, he wore on his coat only the diamond insignia of the Order of * * * *.

The orange ribbon and enameled cross of the Grand Commander of the Golden Eagle of Gerolstein, was suspended from the neck of Sir Walter Murph. The Baron de Graün bore the same decoration; and we will just mention, *en passant*, that an innumerable quantity of crosses from all the countries of Europe, hung dangling from a small golden chain, placed between the first two button holes of his coat.

"I am delighted," said Rodolphe, "with the good tidings which Madam George sends me, of our dear little protegé on the farm of Bouqueval. David's attention has effected a great change; and excepting the deep melancholy which afflicts her, she has no complaint left. By the way, speaking of Fleur de Marie, confess, Sir Walter Murph, that if one of your disreputable acquaintances in the Cité should see you, he would scarcely recognize the brave coalman in this disguise?"

"But I think that your Highness would excite equal surprise if you should make a friendly call on Madam Pipelet, with the intention of cheering the melancholy Alfred, who desires nothing but to love you, as the estimable portière says; you have so graphically described him to us, with his magesterial green coat, his official look, and immovable chapeau, that I almost see him before my eyes. But how is your Highness pleased with the industry of my secret agent? That house in rue du Temple can scarcely have failed to fulfill my lord's expectations."

"Yes," said Rodolphe, "I found there more than I expected to see:" then after a moment's gloomy silence attempting to expel the painful suspicion of the Marchioness d'Harville from his mind, he said in a more cheerful tone, "it may be childishness, but I take great pleasure in these extreme contrasts. One day seated as a fan-painter in a den of the rue aux Fèves; this morning a merchant's clerk, offering a glass of cassis to Madam Pipelet; and this evening, one of those privileged ones that reign; (for the man with forty crowns spoke of 'his income' as if he were a millionare,") added Rodolphe, parenthetically alluding to the small extent of his domain.

"But many a millionare, has not the admirable qualities of the man with the forty crowns."

"Oh my dear de Graün, you are too kind—a thousand times too kind; you feed me on roses, you overpower me with delight;" replied Rodolphe, affecting at the same time embarrassment and delight, while the Baron looked at Murph with the air of a man conscious of some blunder.

"Indeed," continued Rodolphe, with imperturbable gravity, "I know not, my dear de Graün, how to repay your kind opinion; how to respond, in becoming terms, to so graceful a compliment."

"My lord, I beg of you not to take the trouble," said the Baron, who had for a moment forgotten Rodolphe's repugnance to flattery, and the merciless railleries with which he avenged it.

"Excuse me, my dear Baron, but I cannot think of being under obligation to you: I must repay my debt. How young you have grown, de Graün; you cannot be more than twenty years of age; the features of Antinous were not more enchanting than yours."

"I beg of you, my lord ——

"Observe, Murph: has the Apollo of Belvidere a more graceful and elegant form?"

"Pardon me, my lord; it is a long time since I have fallen into this error."

"And that purple cloak—how it becomes him?"

"Have mercy, my lord; and I will improve my manners."

"And that golden circle, which holds without hiding those raven locks, floating on that divine neck?"

"Come my lord, have mercy: I repent, I retract unconditionally," said the unfortunate diplomate, with an expression of comical despair; whose fifty years of age, gray hair cropped and powdered, gold spectacles and high cravat, the reader, we trust, has not forgotten.

"Upon my word, Murph, he only needs a quiver on his back and a bow in his hand, to represent the vanquisher of the serpent Python."

"Pardon him, my lord," said Murph, laughing; "do not overwhelm him with your mythology; I will be responsible that for

* A place designed to rake government horses.

a long time to come, he shall utter no more flattery, since in the new vocabulary of Gerolstein truth is thus translated."

"What! do you also presume, old Murph?"

"I have a compassion for de Graün, and wish to share his punishment."

"My worthy coal-heaver, your devoted friendship is worthy of all credit; but seriously, my dear de Graün, how can you forget that I only tolerate flattery in d'Harnein and his like, for they can say nothing else; it is the natural warbling of their feathery tribe, but from a man of your sense, I expect something better."

"Well, my lord," said the Baron in a different tone, "there is much pride, if your Highness will forgive me, in your aversion to praise."

"I like this strain much better: but pray, explain yourself, Baron?"

"Why, my lord, it is precisely as if a pretty woman should say to one of her admires: 'I know, sir, that I am charming; your approbation is utterly useless and wearisome; why should you be constantly affirming a truism merely? Do people run about saying the sun shines?'"

"You are now more adroit, and of course more dangerous, Baron; so to vary your punishment, I will inform you that the Abbé Polidori could not have more completely disguised the poison."

"My lord, I say no more."

"So, your Highness has no doubt," said Murph soberly, "that it is the Abbé himself whom you have discovered under the mask of this quack?"

"I have not the least doubt of it now, since you have informed me that you have been for sometime aware of his presence in Paris."

"I did not mention it to you, my lord, because I knew how odious to your Highness is any recollection of that priest."

The features of Rodolphe grew sombre; a shade of unpleasant thought passed over his brow; and he spoke not a word until the carriage entered the courtyard of the embassy.

Every window of the immense mansion reflected a vivid light far into the darkness of the night. A file of lackeys, in splendid livery, reached from the peristyle and ante-room as far as the waiting hall, where were seen crowds of valets—an imposing and regal display. The Count and the Countess paid to Rodolphe the compliment of remaining in the receiving-room, until his arrival. His Highness soon entered, followed by Murph and de Graün.

Rodolphe was now thirty-six years of age. Although thus far advanced, the perfect regularity of his features, beautiful even to effeminacy, and his dignified and distinguished manner, would have anywhere attracted attention to his appearance, if these advantages had not been enhanced by his august rank. The moment he entered the first saloon of the embassy, he was transformed; the unpolished air dropped instantly from him; he had no longer the quick and firm step of the vanquisher of Chourineur; he was no longer a laughing clerk, sympathizing with the misfortunes of Madam Pipelet. He was a PRINCE in the most ideal signification of the word. Rodolphe carried his head with a high and haughty air; his brown hair curling naturally, set off in fine relief his high, noble, and expanded forehead; his glance beams with mildness and dignity; if he addresses words of kindness to any one, his smile is full of meaning and refinement, revealing teeth of enamelled purity, which the dark shade of his mustache render still more dazzling; while dark whiskers descend over his pale and oval face as low as the chin. Rodolphe's dress is very simple; his cravat and vest are white; a blue coat buttoned up high, on the left side of which sparkles a diamond cross, displays to full advantage his slender and elegant form; an air of dauntless resolution relieves the excessive gracefulness of his person. Rodolphe was so seldom seen in the fashionable world, and his air was so princely and distinguished, that all eyes were directed toward him, as he entered the first saloon of the embassy, a few steps in advance of Baron de Graün and Murph. An attaché, charged with watching for his arrival, hastened to inform the Countess of that event, who with her husband advanced to meet him.

"I know not," said she, "how to express to your Highness, my obligations, for the honor you have conferred upon us to-day."

"You know, Countess, that I am always eager to pay you my most devoted respects, and to assure the Count of my warm attachment; for the embassador and myself are old acquaintances."

"The kindness of your Highness in remembering it, is a weighty addition to our obligations."

"I assure you, Count, that it is not my fault, if certain recollections are ever present to my memory; for I have the peculiarity of remembering only what has been agreeable to me."

"Your Highness is fortunate," said the Countess, smiling.

"Am I not, madam! Many years hence I shall have the pleasure to remind you of this day; to speak of the taste and the elegance which preside over this faultless display; for I frankly confess that I know not your equal in the arrangement of a fete."

"My lord——"

"And this is not all. Tell me, Madam Embassadress, why in your saloons, beauty appears more triumphant and charming, than in any other position?"

"It is because your Highness inspires all with the same obligations for your kindness, as you do the Countess and myself."

"Allow me to differ from you, Count. I think it is entirely owing to your lady."

"Will your Highness be kind enough to explain the mystery?" said the Countess, with a smile.

"It is very simple. You welcome them all with so much urbanity; you speak a word so charming and apposite to each, that the countenance of those who do not *entirely* merit such compliments, expand with delight; while the faces of those who do deserve them, are more beautiful in their tranquillity and repose. Thus the glow of satisfaction is called into every cheek; happiness increases the charms of the most plain; and it is for this reason, that the ladies appear more beautiful in your saloons than in any other place. I am sure the embassador is of my opinion."

"I must confess that I defer to the plausibility of your Highness's reasons."

"As for me, my lord," said the Countess, "I will run the risk of appearing as charming as you say those are who do not entirely merit my compliments: for I will accept the flattering explanation of your Highness, with as much pleasure and gratitude as if it were the truth."

"To convince you, Countess, that nothing is more true, let us offer some compliments to your guests, for the purpose of testing the effect."

"Oh! my lord; that would be too cruel a snare," said the Countess of ***, laughing.

"I will renounce the project only on one condition; and that is, that you accept my arm for a moment. I have been told of a fairy garden, which blooms in the month of January. Will you have the kindness to display to me this magical wonder of the Arabian Nights?"

"With the greatest pleasure, my lord. I fear that it will not be found equal to your Highness's expectations, unless your habitual indulgence triumphs over your judgment."

Rodolphe gave his arm to the Countess, and proceeded with her through the adjoining apartments, while the Count addressed himself to Murph and the Baron de Graün, with whom he had been long acquainted.

CHAPTER XIII. ..... THE WINTER-GARDEN.

NOTHING could be more fairy-like, or better calculated to recall to mind the Thousand and One Nights, than the garden of which Rodolphe had spoken to the Countess of ***.

Imagine, at the end of a long and splendid gallery, in the form of a parallelogram, eighty yards long by sixty wide, a glass cage of extreme lightness of structure, fashioned in the shape of an arch, and rising to the height of about one hundred and fifty feet. Its sides were concealed by an endless number of glass reflectors, of a diamond form, treillaged over by a green osier net-work, which, by the aid of the mirrors, were made to resemble a trellised bower. A palisade of orange-trees, as lofty as those at the Tuileries, and camelias equally large—the first loaded with glittering fruit, like golden apples, hanging beneath a foliage of bright green; the last enamelled by purple, white, and rose-colored flowers—covered the whole extent of its walls.

Such is the inclosure of the garden.

Five or six clusters of small trees and shrubs of India or of the tropics, planted in mounds of heath, surround walks that are marbled by a beautiful mosaic of shell-work, and sufficiently broad to admit two or three persons to walk abreast.

It is impossible to portray the effect produced by this rich and beautiful exotic vegetation, in the depth of winter, and, it may be said, in the midst of a ball-room.

Here, huge banana-trees, reaching almost to the glazed ceiling, intermingled their large green branches with the spear-shaped leaves of the immense magnolias; some of which were already covered with fragrant and magnificent flowers, with bell-formed cups, purple without and silvered within, from which

emerged bright golden stamens. At a short distance from the palm-trees, the beauty of this assemblage of verdure was rendered perfect by date-trees from the Levant, red macaw-trees from Brazil, and India fig-trees; all presenting a display of verdure as glittering and brilliant as tropical vegetation could make it. They seemed even to borrow the sparkling brilliancy of the emerald; to such an extent the leaves of these rich and glossy trees were clad in glittering and metallic tints.

The whole length of the treillage, between the orange-trees and this dense shrubbery, was interlaced by garlands of leaves and flowers, netted in spiral forms; farther off, innumerable vines, united in inextricable net-work, ran climbing and winding to the summit of the glassy roof; the pennated pomegranate, the passion-flower in its brilliant purple, striated with azure and surmounted with a dark violet crest, hung from the key of the arch like a colossal garland, seeming anxious to grasp with its delicate tendrils the arrows of the gigantic aloes.

There, an India *bignonia*, with its slender leaves and long calyx of sulphurish yellow, is surrounded by another vine, whose white and luxuriant flowers emit a sweet and agreeable odor; these two, thus interlaced, festoon with their green fringe, like bell-flowers of gold and silver, the immense velveted leaves of an India fig-tree.

Farther on, there jet and fall, like a variegated and vegetable cascade, innumerable stalks of *asclepiades*, whose leaves and umbels, and fifteen or twenty starry flowers, are so dense and polished as to resemble bouquets of enamelled roses, encompassed by small leaves of green porcelain.

Cape jessamine, tulips from Holland, narcissus of Constantinople, hyacinths of Persia, and fleurs-de-lis, composed the borders of this hedge, and formed a kind of natural carpet of all colors and all shades, blended together in the most splendid manner.

Chinese lanterns of transparent silk, some blue and others of a pale pink, here and there half concealed amid the foliage, lighten the garden. It is impossible to convey the effect of the soft and mysterious light produced by these two shades; a light of such limpid blue, and so mystic and entrancing in its influence, as to recall to mind the roseate hues of a beautiful night, blending with the vermilion of an aurora borealis.

Two or three feet below this immense conservatory, was a long gallery, dazzling with light, with gold, with mirrors, and with crystals. This glistening transparency framed, thus to speak, the penumbra where were vaguely depicted the huge trees of the winter-garden, discovered through a large opening half closed by two lofty curtains of crimson velvet. It might be called a gigantic window, opening on to a beautiful Asiatic landscape, during the serenity of twilight.

From the extremity of the garden, where were placed immense divans under a dome of leaves and flowers, the gallery afforded a striking contrast to the soft obscurity of the conservatory. From afar, it resembled a luminous gilded mist. It sparkled like a living embroidery, ornamented by the brilliant and varied colors of female robes, and by the prismatic tints of precious stones and diamonds.

The sounds of the orchestra, weakened by distance and mingled with the dull and joyous hum of the gallery, died away melodiously in the foliage of the huge exotic trees.

In this garden, the voice was involuntarily lowered: so hushed was its stillness, that the lightest footstep, or even the rustling of satin dresses, would have disturbed it. The atmosphere, embalmed with a thousand sweet odors of aromatic plants, was at once light and mild; and the cadence of music, softened by distance, fell upon the senses like sweet and effeminate languor.

Surely, two newly-captivated and happy lovers, seated upon silk in some shady corner of this Eden, intoxicated by love, by harmony and perfume, could scarcely find a more enchanting spot for the enjoyment of an ardent passion yet in its dawn. Alas! that the calm and confident happiness of two such beings should change within one or two short months into icy coldness.

On arriving within this charming winter-garden, Rodolphe could not withhold an exclamation of surprise, and said to the embassadress:

"Truly, madam, I could scarcely believe in anything so wonderful. It is not luxury alone, joined to exquisite taste—it is poetry in action: without employing either the language of the poet, or the pencil of the artist, you have created that of which they would not have dared to dream."

"Your Highness is a thousand times too good."

"Frankly own, that he who could faithfully represent this enchanting *tableau*, with all its charm of color and of contrast—there the dazzling tumult, here this voluptuous retreat—own, madam, that he, whether painter or poet, would accomplish a most wonderful work; and after all, only by reproducing yours."

"The praises in which your Highness indulges with such inspiration, charm so much by their lively spirit, as to command attention in spite of one's self, and are thereby rendered more dangerous. But see, my lord, what a lovely young woman! Your Highness will at least admit, that the Marchioness d'Harville is beautiful *everywhere*. How charming her grace! She suffers nothing in contrast with the severe beauty who accompanies her."

The Countess Sarah McGregor and the Marchioness d'Harville descended, at the same moment, the few steps leading from the gallery into the winter-garden.

CHAPTER XIV.....A RENDEZVOUS.

The compliments bestowed upon the Marchioness d'Harville, by the Countess of * * *, were not exaggerated. Nothing can give an idea of that enchanting countenance, where bloomed every flower of beauty—of beauty the more rare, as it consisted less in any regularity of feature, than in a charm of expression, in which modesty and goodness were inseparably blended. We say *goodness*, because that trait is not usually predominant in the face of a female of twenty; lovely, *spirituelle*, admired, flattered, the cynosure of all eyes and all hearts, as was the Marchioness d'Harville. This ineffable gentleness of expression, which her triumphs in the fashionable world had never impaired; this serene glance of goodness, which had survived all the admiration and the flatteries of the most distinguished and brilliant men of the age; all the eclat of birth, rank and fortune, added to her other fascinations, all the charms of poetry and romance; and interested a thousand hearts in her destiny, which might never have been touched by the unsurpassed loveliness of her person. Too deserving and eminently endowed to solicit the admiration which she was born to command, her disposition was so kind and affectionate, that she was as grateful for tributes which were yielded to her beauty, as if they were extorted from the compassion of her votaries. She was not rendered proud, but happy, by admiration; she was indifferent to praise, but alive to kindness; and skillful in distinguishing between flattery and sympathy. Her wit was keen and discriminating; pursuing with inoffensive raillery that class of people, who, in love with themselves, are ever eager to attract attention—to display a face ever lighted up with silly complacency, or a silly pride: "people," said the Marchioness, prettily, "who, during their whole lives, seem to be standing before an invisible mirror, and smiling at themselves in it." But a character which was modest and retiring, on the contrary, always enlisted the interest and affection of the Marchioness d'Harville. These few words will give the reader some idea of her beauty. Her complexion was of most transparent delicacy, mingling the hues of the lily and the rose; long tresses of light-brown hair, fell upon shoulders as chiseled and polished as the purest Carrara. It would be difficult to paint the beauty of her large hazel eye, fringed with its long dark and silken lashes; her mouth of perfect symmetry; and a voice, whose dulcet tones harmonized with the mild and melancholy charm of her expression. We will say nothing of the perfection of her form, and the exquisite grace of her motion. She wore a dress of white crape, adorned with the blossoms and the leaves of the camelia, among which half-concealed diamonds sparkled like drops of dew: a similar garland gracefully encircled her pure white brow.

The style of the Countess McGregor's beauty added much by contrast to the charms of the Marchioness. Full thirty-five years of age, Sarah appeared no more than thirty. Nothing contributes so much to the health of the body as callous selfishness: ice is a great remedy for decay. Certain souls, seared, harsh, unreached by any of those emotions which wear away the heart, and destroy the bloom, are only capable of disappointed ambition or mortified pride; sorrows, of a class which have little influence upon the constitution. The excellent preservation of the Countess is proof of this position. Except a slight *embonpoint*, which increased her voluptuousness, Sarah shone with all her youthful charms and graces. Few hearts could bear unmoved, the deceitful glance of her large black eyes; her dewy, rosy lips, which (half lying) expressed resolution and sensuality; the light-blue veins of her temples and neck, could be clearly discerned beneath her snow-white skin. The Countess McGregor was dressed in a straw-colored silk, beneath a crape tunic of the same color; a simple crown of pyrrus leaves, of emerald green, upon her head, suiting well her raven locks, that were parted on the forehead; which, together with an aquiline nose, gave to the imperious and passionate profile of the female the appearance of a classic antique.

Many people, dupes to their own appearance, think that their destined vocation can be discerned in the character of their

physiognomy. One finds himself excessively warlike in appearance, and becomes a soldier; another, poetical, and he makes rhymes; a third, intriguing, and he intrigues; a fourth, political, and he dabbles in politics; a fifth, devout, and he mounts a pulpit. Sarah, with some reason, thinking that she had a queenly countenance, accepted with avidity the predictions of the Highlandress, and aspired to a sovereign destiny.

The Marchioness and Sarah had perceived Rodolphe in the winter-garden, when they entered it; but the Prince affected not to see them, for he was turning into a passage when the two ladies arrived.

"The Prince is so occupied with the embassadress," said the Marchioness to Sarah, "that he takes no notice of us."

"Do not believe it, my dear Clemence," replied the Countess, who was on most intimate terms with her companion, "the Prince saw us perfectly; but I frightened him away, for his pique still continues."

"I understand, less than ever, his strange obstinacy in avoiding you; and I have often reproached him for such singular conduct toward an old friend. 'The Countess Sarah and myself are mortal enemies,' said he, jestingly; 'and you can judge how sacred a vow must be, which her charming powers will not tempt me to break.' However strange the answer may appear, I was obliged to rest contented with it, for I could get no other."*

"I can answer you, that the cause of this 'mortal enmity'—spoken I presume, half in jest, half in earnest—is of the most trifling description; and if a third person was not involved in the secret, I should have confided it to you long since. But what ails you, my dear child; you seem very absent!"

"Nothing. It was so warm in the galleries as to produce a slight headache: let us be seated here for a moment; it will soon leave me, I hope."

"You are right; here is a very dark corner, which will defy the researches of those your absence will grieve," said Sarah, smiling, and emphasizing her words. They both took a seat on the divan. "I said *those* whom your absence will grieve: are you not grateful for my discretion, my dear Clemence?"

The young Marchioness blushed slightly, cast down her eyes, but made no reply.

"You are not very reasonable," continued Sarah. "Have you no confidence in me, my child? Surely, my child, for I am old enough to call you daughter."

"No confidence in you!" said the Marchioness, in a sad tone. "On the contrary, have I not told you what I should have concealed from myself!"

"Very true: let us then speak of *him*. Have you determined to drive him to despair—to death?"

"What do you mean?" said the Marchioness, with terror.

"You may be unconscious of it, but it is so. You know not how painfully susceptible those are, who have suffered long. Only a few minutes since, I observed two large tears in his eye."

"Can it be true!"

"And all this grief in the very midst of a ball-room, at the risk of being exposed to ridicule! Do you know that one must love deeply, to suffer thus; to be unable to conceal his tears before curious eyes?"

"I beg of you to speak no more of it. You give me great pain. I know very well that expression of grief, so mild and so resigned: the compassion with which he has inspired me has been my ruin."

"What an exaggeration! Ruined by a flirtation with a man, whose discretion is so extreme, that he denies himself an introduction to your husband, through fear of compromising your harmony! Mr. Charles Robert is a man of heart, as well as of delicacy and honor. I defend him so warmly, because you made his acquaintance at my house, and because I know that he has for you the greatest respect and affection."

"I never doubted his noble qualities, which you have so frequently eulogized; but it is the misfortunes which he has endured, that have particularly interested me."

"Confess that he deserves and justifies your interest. How could so beautiful a face be other than the reflex of an exalted soul? His noble and lofty form reminds me of the knights of chivalry. A more martial air it is impossible to imagine. If titles followed merit, the plain *Mr.* Charles Robert would be a Duke or a Peer, and represent one of the most distinguished names in France."

"You know that I am but slightly influenced by nobility of birth, as you often reproach me with being a little republican," said the Marchioness, smiling.

"Certainly;" have always thought with you, that rank could not lend an additional charm to Mr. Charles Robert. With what genius is he imbued! what a captivating voice he possesses! Do you remember how indispensable he was in our morning concerts? You remember the first time he sung with you? What emotion, what expression, he breathed into that little duet!"

"I beg of you," said the Marchioness, after a moment's silence, "to change the topic of conversation."

"And why?"

"Because it is painful for me to think that Mr. Robert's feelings should be so deeply interested."

"In a character so passionate, the rashest deed would not surprise me."

"I entreat you, my dear Countess, to speak no more of it; the thought is frightful to me!" and after a pause, the Marchioness continued: "I beg of you, once more, to speak of something else. Let us rather talk of your 'mortal enemy,'" said she, with assumed cheerfulness. "Let us speak of the Prince. I have not seen him for some time: he is charming, though a king; and I admire him, though I am a republican. There are but few men more agreeable to me."

Sarah threw a stealthy and scrutinizing glance on Madam d'Harville, and then said with a smile:

"Confess, my dear Clemence, that you are very capricious. You alternately admire and detest the Prince. You were in such raptures upon his first arrival some months ago, that to speak frankly, I had fears for the tranquillity of your heart."

"I have to thank you," said the Marchioness, with a smile, "that my admiration was not of a long continuance. You acted so well the part of a 'mortal enemy,' and made such revelations about him, that I must confess that indifference assumed the place of that admiration, which caused you to fear for the safety of my heart—which, I believe, the Prince never thought of jeopardizing; for, long before your disclosures, although he continued his visits to my husband, he never evinced any consciousness of my existence,"

"By the way, is your husband here this evening?" asked Sarah.

"No; he did not leave the house," said the Marchioness, slightly embarrassed.

"He very seldom seeks society," said Sarah.

"Yes; he prefers remaining at home," replied the Marchioness, casting down her eyes.

Sarah perceived the Marchioness's emotion, and continued: "The last time I saw him he looked paler than usual."

"Yes; he has not been well of late."

"Now, my dear Clemence, do you wish me to be frank?"

"Indeed, I do."

"Whenever we mention your husband's name, you always evince a singular anxiety."

"I! what an idea!"

"Sometimes when his name is mentioned, your looks convey—how shall I express myself? Yes, your countenance conveys a sort of timid repugnance," said Sarah, laying great stress on her words, as if she would reach the heart of her victim.

The impassible look of the Marchioness defied at first the inquisition of Sarah; she succeeded, however, in detecting a slight nervous agitation of the frame, and a scarcely perceptible tremor of the under lip. Not wishing, at present, to push her investigations any further, or, at least, to excite suspicion, she hastened to change the current of her friend's thoughts. "Yes," said she, "a sort of repugnance which a jealous husband invariably inspires."

At this construction of her feelings, the tremor of the Marchioness's under lip obviously ceased; and with the appearance of being relieved from a weight of anxiety, she replied:

"By no means. The Marquis d'Harville is neither morose nor jealous." Then seeking, perhaps, a pretext for changing a conversation so disagreeable, she said: "Oh, dear! here is that intolerable Duke de Lucenay, one of my husband's friends. I hope he will not perceive us. Where does he come from? I thought him a thousand leagues off."

"So also did I. It was said that he had gone on a journey to the east, which would last for a year or two; and it is now hardly five months since he left Paris. His arrival here is very sudden, and I presume not highly satisfactory to his Duchess, although he does not trouble her much," said Sarah, with a malicious smile; "and she will not be the only one that will regret the Duke's return. Mr. de Saint Remy will share her grief——"

"Be not a slanderer, Sarah. Say only, that the Duke de Lucenay's return will be troublesome to everybody; for I do not know a person that can tolerate his disagreeable manners."

"Slanderer! No; in this case I am only an echo. It is said

* The love of Rodolphe for Sarah, and the events which had occurred eighteen years previous, were entirely unknown to the world—secured seventeen or both having an equal interest for concealment. Rodolphe.

that Mr. de Saint Remy, that model of elegance who dazzles all Paris with his airs, is almost ruined; though he still contrives, in some way or other, to keep up his establishment. To be sure, the Duchess is very rich."

"Oh! you are too bad."

"Once more, I am only an echo. But, good Heaven! the Duke has observed us, and is coming this way. We must be resigned, awful as his visitation may be. I know nothing in the world more intolerable than that man; his manners are so disagreeable, he laughs so loud and is so boisterous generally, that he makes one deaf. If you have any regard for your fan, or smelling bottle, defend it courageously, for he breaks everything that he touches, and seems delighted with the exploit."

The Duke de Lucenay belonged to one of the most distinguished families in France. He was still young, and with a face that was only rendered disagreeable by the extraordinary length of his nose. Such was the turbulence and the excessive rudeness of his manner; the harshness of his voice and the boisterousness of his laughter—his words so rude and indelicate—his attitudes so eccentric and vulgar—that it was constantly requisite to recall to mind his title and his name, to account for his presence in the most select and polished society of Paris; and to understand, why people tolerated habits and expressions so disreputable as those in which the Duke habitually indulged, with a sort of prescriptive impunity. He was shunned as a pestilence; although he was not wanting in a certain sort of wit, which occasionally flashed forth from an immense quantity of exclamations, categories, shouts, and words of every character and description. He was one of those persons who are only useful except for purposes of vengeance; for a deeper anathema could not be breathed against hateful and disagreeable people, than to desire that they might fall into the hands of the Duke de Lucenay.

INQUIRIES.

The Duchess of Lucenay, who had reached her thirtieth year, was one of the most agreeable and fashionable women of Paris. The inconstancy of her conduct, which had given her a somewhat notorious reputation, was excused on account of the intolerable whimsicalities of her husband. The most prominent trait of his disposition was evinced in the freedom and impudence of his strange and exaggerated expressions; so indicative of that species of mental estrangment which deals in impossibilities and absurdities, with all the pretension of truth, that when uttered in a loud tone before a hundred persons, creates a feeling of discomfort, if not of pain. The Duke, perfectly fearless of the consequences of his mischievous jests and caprices, had given and received many sword-thrusts without the least amendment.

Thus premising, we will now attempt to ring in the ears of the reader, the sharp and piercing tones of Mr. de Lucenay's voice, who cried out from a distance the moment he perceived Madam d'Harville and Sarah,

"Well, well; what is that? what is that I see there? How now? the most beautiful women of the ball keeping themselves out of the way. Is that to be permitted! have I come from the antipodes to put a stop to such scandal? Truly, Marchioness, if you thus continue to steal away from general admiration, I shall cry fire! I shall shout in every ear the disappearance of the most lovely ornament of this fête."

Thus concluding his harrangue, de Lucenay threw himself backward upon the divan by the side of the Marchioness; after which, he crossed his left leg upon his right thigh and took his foot in his hand.

"How is it, sir, that we see you already returned from Constantinople?" said Madam d'Harville, drawing back hastily.

"Already? You say exactly what my wife thought, I am sure; for she refused to accompany me this evening on my return to society. Take your friends by surprise, if you like such reception."

"It was very natural; it would have been so easy for you to remain agreeably, down there," said Madam d'Harville, somewhat satirically.

"You mean, to have remained absent, do you not? Oh! it's horrible! it's infamous to talk thus," cried de Lucenay; at the same time crossing his legs and thumming upon his hat, as if it were a tambourine.

"For Heaven's sake, Duke, do not hallo so loud; be more quiet, or you will compel us to quit the place," said Madam d'Harville, in a vexed tone.

"Quit the place? for no other purpose than that of taking my arm and strolling in the gallery?"

"With you? assuredly not. There, see I beseech you not to touch this bouquet; and pray let that fan alone—you will only break it as you usually do."

"As to that, I have broken more than one; yes in fact, a most magnificent Chinese fan that Madam de Vandemont gave to my wife."

On saying these comforting words, de Lucenay fidgeted himself into a net-work of clambering vines, which he had drawn to him by sudden jerks. He finished, by detaching them from the tree that sustained them; they fell, and the Duke, so to speak, found himself crowned.

Then there arose such a burst of laughter, so shrill and deafening, that Madam d'Harville would have fled from this troublesome and vexatious character, if she had not perceived Mr. Charles Robert (the Commander, as Madam Pipelet called him,) advancing at the other extremity of the walk. The young wife, fearing that it might have the appearance of an intentional meeting, remained with de Lucenay.

"Don't you think, Madam McGregor, that I certainly have the appearance of a god? Pan, Sylvanus, Satyr, or if you choose, a mermaid, or a savage, beneath this foliage!" said de Lucenay, addressing Sarah, beside whom he was in the act of abruptly sprawling himself. "Speaking of savages, I must relate to you a most outrageously disagreeable story. Imagine yourself at Otaheite ——."

"Duke!" said Sarah, in a most freezing tone.

"Oh, very well then—I will not tell you the story; i will keep it for Madam de Fonbonne: here she comes."

She was a little fat woman, of fifty years of age, with a most assuming and ridiculous manner, with her chin drawn down to her neck. She constantly exhibited the whites of her large eyes when speaking of her soul, the languor of her soul, the privations of her soul, the aspirations of her soul. She wore that evening a hideous turban of a brass-colored material, decorated by a profusion of green figures.

"I am keeping it for Madam de Fonbonne," said the Duke.

"What is the Duke alluding to?" said Madam de Fonbonne, in a mincing and cooing tone, and *turning up the whites of her eyes*, to speak vulgarly.

"He is alluding, madam, to a horribly, disagreeable, indecent, and indecorous ——"

"Oh, Heavens! who is it that would permit? who would be allowed! ——"

"I, madam: I admit that it would make you blush like an old turkey-cock, but I know your taste; therefore listen to me."

"Sir! ——"

"Very well, then, you shall not hear my story; because after all, you, who always dress so well; with so much taste, with so much elegance; are wearing this evening a turban, which, permit me to tell you, upon my word of honor, resembles an old bakepan, corroded by verdigris."

Then the Duke burst out into a laugh.

"If you have returned from the east to commence your facetious absurdities, that are only allowed to pass because you are half an idiot," said the irritated fat woman, "your return will be deeply regretted, sir."

And she walked off majestically.

"I see, I must keep within bounds, so as not to disturb the head-geer of this precious creature," said de Lucenay. "I respect her, however; she is an orphan: ha! ha! ha!" and then he laughed anew. "Hold! there's Mr. Charles Robert; I met him at the springs of the Pyrenees; it's a dazzling boy that he sings like a swan. You will see, Marchioness, how I will puzzle him. Do you wish me to introduce him?"

"Be quiet and let us alone," said Sarah.

While Mr. Charles Robert was approaching, with the air of one admiring the flowers of the conservatory, de Lucenay manœuvered so skilfully as to gain possession of Sarah's smelling bottle, and was occupying himself silently and with great care in spoiling the stopper of the trinket.

Mr. Charles Robert continued to advance. His large figure was perfectly proportioned, his features were irreproachably innocent, and his dress supremely elegant. His face and form however, were wanting in the charms of grace and gentility his gait was stiff and constrained, and his hands and feet were large and vulgar. The instant he perceived Madam d'Harville the vacancy of his countenance changed to an expression of deep melancholy; quite too sudden to be real, but nevertheless the deception was perfect. Mr. Robert had the appearance of being so wretchedly miserable and desolate when he approached Madam d'Harville, that she could not avoid returning to mind the remarks of Sarah, upon the heart-rending condition into which his despair had driven him.

"Sir," said de Lucenay, stopping him, "Ah! good-day not had the pleasure of seeing you since we

met at the springs. But what is the matter with you? You seem to be suffering."

At this, Mr. Charles Robert cast a long and melancholy look upon Madam d'Harville, and responded to the Duke, in a most plaintively accentuated voice:

"It is a fact, sir; I am suffering——"

"My God! Then you cannot get rid of your phlegm!" said de Lucenay, apparently with the most serious interest.

The question was so impertinent and absurd, that for a moment Mr. Charles Robert remained stupefied and astonished; after which, the redness of anger mounting to his temples, he answered de Lucenay in a firm and rapid voice:

"Since you take so much interest in my health, sir, I hope that on the morrow you will call and inform yourself concerning it."

"How so, my dear sir? Certainly, I will send," said the Duke with haughtiness.

Mr. Charles Robert bowed slightly, and walked away.

"What is the strangest thing in the world is, that he has no more phlegm than the Grand Turk," said de Lucenay, on again rejoining Sarah; "at least, I imagine so, without knowing it. Tell me, Madam McGregor, does the gentleman appear to you to have phlegm!"

Sarah turned her back abruptly upon de Lucenay, without making a reply.

All this passed very rapidly.

Sarah found difficulty in restraining her laughter.

Madam d'Harville was grievously afflicted at the atrocious position of a man, so ridiculously situated before a woman whom he loved. She was alarmed at the thought that it might be productive of a duel: then, carried away by an irresistible feeling of pity, she arose hastily, took the arm of Sarah, followed after Mr. Charles Robert—who was yet possessed with rage—and said to him, in a low voice, as she passed near him:

"*To-morrow at one o'clock—I will go.*"

She then regained the gallery with the Countess, and quitted the ball.

CHAPTER XV. ..... "YOU COME VERY LATE, MY ANGEL."

RODOLPHE, in going to the ball for the purpose of fulfilling the obligations of civility, determined to improve the opportunity by ascertaining, whether the Marchioness d'Harville was the heroine of Madam Pipelet's farce. After Rodolphe had left the winter-garden, he walked through several of the apartments with the hope of finding the Marchioness alone. He was again returning to the conservatory, and was halting for a moment on the first step, when he was an unexpected witness of the rapid scene which took place between the Marchioness and Mr. Charles Robert, after the detestable joke of the Duke de Lucenay. Rodolphe observed an interchange of very meaning glances. A secret presentiment informed him that this tall and handsome young man could be no other than the Commander. Wishing to verify his convictions, he returned to the gallery. A waltz was about to be commenced. Mr. Charles Robert, who was very brave, in spite of his contemptible character, was standing before a door with more than ordinary complacency of appearance; for he was satisfied with the answer of the Duke, and he was assured of a rendezvous with the Marchioness. Rodolphe went in search of Murph.

"Do you see," said he, "that fair young man in the centre of that group, yonder?"

"That tall one, who has the appearance of being so well satisfied with himself? Yes, my lord."

"Approach so near him as to be able to whisper, without his knowing whence it came, these words: '*You come very late, my angel.*'"

The Squire, looking at Rodolphe with a glance of surprise, said, "Are you in earnest, my lord?"

"Certainly I am. Should he turn round at these words, assume that magnificent *sangfroid* which I have so often admired in you, so that the gentleman may not discover who pronounced the words."

"I do not comprehend the mystery, my lord, but I will obey."

Before the end of the waltz, the worthy Murph had succeeded in placing himself directly behind Mr. Charles Robert.

Rodolphe placed himself in such a position as to command a perfect view of the experiment. He watched Murph attentively, and in a few seconds saw Mr. Charles Robert turn round with an air of stupefied perplexity. The impassible and phlegmatic Squire did not wince; and that tall bald man, with a grave and austere countenance, was the very last whom the Commander could suspect of speaking these offensive words, which recalled to his mind the unpleasant maladventure of which Madam Pipelet was the cause and the heroine.

The waltz having been concluded, Murph returned to Rodolphe.

"Well, my lord, the man turned round as suddenly as if I had bitten him: those words must be magical."

"They are, my old Murph, and have revealed to me what I desired much to know."

Rodolphe was moved with deep compassion toward the Marchioness d'Harville, for an error into which he had no doubt she had been seduced by the Countess Sarah. The discovery gave him great pain. The melancholy of the Marquis was no longer enigmatical to him: jealousy was undoubtedly its cause. His wife, endowed with most charming qualities, had unquestionably sacrificed him to this contemptible puppy. Rodolphe, master of this secret, obtained by accident, was incapable of abusing it; and no means were in his power, consistent with delicacy, of enlightening the Marchioness, who was hastening to her ruin under the influence of some wild infatuation; and he was compelled to be a passive witness of a disgrace which it was impossible for him to prevent.

These reflections were interrupted by the appearance of Baron de Graün.

"If your Highness will grant me a moment's conversation in that small saloon, which is now vacant, I shall have the honor of giving you the information you deputed me to obtain." Rodolphe followed the Baron.

"The only Duchess," said de Graün, "whose name can be possibly represented by the initials N. and L., is the Duchess de Lucenay, born Noirmont. She is not here to-night. I have just seen her husband, Duke de Lucenay, who left here five months ago, for a journey to the east, but returned unexpectedly a few days since."

It will be remembered, that during his visit to the house in the rue du Temple, Rodolphe had found, almost at the door of the charlatan Cesar Bradamanti, a handkerchief bathed in tears, richly adorned with lace, and in the corner of which he had observed the initials L. N., surmounted by a ducal coronet. By the orders of Rodolphe, but in ignorance of its bearing, the Baron de Graün had made inquiries about the names of the duchesses actually in Paris, and had obtained the information just communicated.

The whole truth flashed upon Rodolphe's mind. He had no motive for interesting himself in the Duchess de Lucenay; but he could not avoid shuddering at the thought, that if she had actually paid a visit to this infamous quack, who was no other than the Abbe Polidori, he was in possession of her name, and possessed the power of torturing the Duchess with the horrible secret she had committed to him.

"Chance frequently brings about strange coincidences, my lord," said the Baron de Graün.

"How so?"

"Why, at the very moment when Mr. de Grangeneuve had just given me the information which I have communicated, and was seasoning it with the scandal, that the unexpected arrival of the Duke must have been very disagreeable to the Duchess, and the most elegant man in Paris, the Viscount de Saint Remy; the embassador asked me, if I thought your Highness would permit him to introduce to you the Viscount, who has just been attached to the Gerolstein embassy, and would consider himself happy at this opportunity of paying his respects to your Highness."

Rodolphe could not suppress a movement of impatience, and said:

"This is exceedingly disagreeable, but I cannot refuse it. Tell the Count of * * * to present Mr. de Saint Remy."

In spite of his unpleasant antipathy, Rodolphe was too well acquainted with the duties of a prince, to be wanting in affability upon this occasion. Besides, his curiosity was somewhat excited to discover what sort of a gentleman a lady of such distinction as the Duchess de Lucenay had selected for a lover.

The Viscount de Saint Remy drew near, conducted by the Count of * * *.

Saint Remy was a charming young man of twenty-five, with a slender but distinguished figure, and a complexion dark as the portraits of Murillo. His black hair, divided by a line above the left temple, plain in front, curled gracefully around his cheeks, scarcely revealing his ear. The dark pupil of his eye stood out in high relief against the azure-tinted white; a peculiarity which gives its striking charm to the glance of the East Indian. By a caprice of nature, a thick mustache on his lip contrasted with a chin and a face as beardless as a young girl's. Through coquetry, he wore his dark satin cravat very low, to display the contour and elegance of a neck like that of the antique Fleuteur. A single pearl, large, pure, and brilliant, closed the folds of his cravat. His dress was in excellent taste, and in perfect harmony

with the magnificent simplicity of his jewel. The face and figure of the Viscount de Saint Remy could never be forgotten; so transcendent was it for its elegance, even in an assemblage of Apollos.

His array of equipages and horses was extremely gorgeous. An accomplished and inveterate gambler, he risked annually upon cards and the turf three thousand louis. His house in the rue de Chaillot was a model of taste and luxury; and he gave weekly the most sumptuous entertainments, at which he lost enormous sums with the most hospitable indifference, although it was known that the Viscount's patrimony had been long since squandered. The supplies of this extravagant prodigality, according to the opinions of most people, came from the princely wealth and known partiality of the Duchess de Lucenay; but, in addition to the scandal of such a hypothesis, it was contradicted by the well-known fact, that the Duchess had no personal control over her own property; and the Viscount de Saint Remy squandered two hundred thousand francs annually. Others spoke of imprudent usurers, of extravagant interest, of successful betting, or corrupt jockeying; but the greatest number of people were totally indifferent from what fountain his extravagance was supplied. He was by birth connected with the most distinguished families; he was lively, brave, witty, accomplished, agreeable; he gave superb dinners; he was ready for any amusement, up to any enterprise, worshipped by the ladies, irresistible in his powers of persuasion, munificent in his expenditure: what did the world care about the source of the Pactolus, so long as it continued to scatter its gold? People said, with a smile, that "Saint Remy had discovered the philosopher's stone." When the report was circulated, that the Viscount had procured the appointment of attaché to the French legation at the court of Gerolstein, the general opinion was, that he designed this diplomatic post as an honorable retreat from a life of dissipation and extravagance, which he had no longer the means of supporting.

The Count of ***, in presenting Saint Remy to Rodolphe, said:

"I have the honor of presenting to your Highness the Viscount de Saint Remy, attaché to the French embassy at Gerolstein."

The Viscount made a low and deferential bow to Rodolphe. "Will your Highness excuse," said he, "the impatience I have experienced to pay to you my respects? I have been perhaps too eager for the enjoyment of an honor which I appreciate so highly."

"I shall be very happy to meet you at Gerolstein, sir. Do you intend leaving soon?"

"The residence of your Highness at Paris diminishes my inclination to depart."

"The sobriety of our German courts, contrasted with the gayety of Paris, will, I fear, be a disagreeable surprise to you."

"I assure your Highness, that the kindness which you condescend to show me, and which I hope will continue, is alone sufficient to prevent me from regretting Paris."

"It shall not be attributable to me, sir, if you find your residence at Gerolstein any other than agreeable to you;" and Rodolphe made a slight inclination with his head, to indicate that the interview had terminated.

The Viscount paid his parting salutations, and retired. Rodolphe was a deep physiognomist, and subject to impressions at first sight in regard to men, which he frequently found justified. After a few words exchanged with Mr. de Saint Remy, without being able to explain satisfactorily to himself the cause, he felt toward him an involuntary aversion: he thought that he discovered in his countenance indications of depravity, perfidy, and cunning.

* * * * * *

We shall again have occasion to meet with the Viscount de Saint Remy, under circumstances in frightful contrast with the brilliant position in the fashionable world which he now occupied; and shall have an opportunity of judging of the truth of Rodolphe's presentiments.

* * * * * *

After this introduction had terminated, and Rodolphe was reflecting upon the singular chances which had, in the course of a few hours, brought before him so many characters in whom he was more or less interested, the hour of supper arrived; and as the saloons were almost deserted, Rodolphe descended again into the winter-garden. In a remote part of the conservatory, at an angle of the two walls—a place which was rendered more secluded by a growth of shrubbery and an enormous bananatree, surrounded by creeping plants, near which a door partly ajar opened into the supper room—Rodolphe now took his seat, sheltered by this screen of verdure. He had been for some moments plunged in deep revery, when his attention was arrested by the sound of his name pronounced in a well-known voice.

Sarah, seated upon the other side of the hedge, was conversing in the English language with her brother Tom. Though her brother was but a few years older than the Countess, his hair was already silvered. He was dressed in black, with a countenance indicative of coolness and deliberation, and a low voice of a cutting tone; and his whole appearance indicated either deep sorrow or inveterate hate. Rodolphe listened attentively to the following conversation:

"The Marchioness has gone for a few moments to the ball of the Baron de Nerval. She fortunately retired without having an interview with Rodolphe, who was evidently seeking for one. I fear his influence over her, an influence which I had such difficulty in combatting and partially destroying. I have always had a presentiment, that at some future day she might prove a rival, who would thwart all my projects. But after to-morrow, all my fears will be at an end; she will be separated from the Prince by an impassable abyss. Now listen to me, for the affair is a serious one."

"I think you are in a great error; the Prince never thought of the Marchioness."

"I can give you some information, which may change your opinion. Many things have transpired since your last journey, which render immediate action necessary; and our decision must be formed this very night, before we leave this ball: fortunately, we are alone."

"I am listening to you."

"I am confident that before the Marchioness saw Rodolphe, she had never been in love. For some cause, I know not what, she has an insuperable aversion toward a husband, who adores her—the mystery defies my powers of penetration. Rodolphe's presence awoke a thousand new emotions in the heart of Clemence. I crushed the passion in the bud, by some overwhelming disclosures which I made about the Prince. But a yearning for some being upon whom she could lavish her love, still remained in the Marchioness's heart. Fortunately, she met with Mr. Charles Robert, at our house, and was struck with his beauty, as people are at the sight of a picture. But that man is as foolish as he is handsome—but still there is something pensive and interesting in his looks; and I exalted to the Marchioness the elevated attributes of his soul! I was aware of the natural kindness of the woman, and I clothed Mr. Charles with all the qualities of poetry and romance; I endowed him with the most interesting and heart-rending misfortunes; I made of him an ideal hero. On the other hand, aware of the weakness and folly of that man, I counselled him to dress his countenance in a mortal melancholy; to proceed with tears, exclamations, and sighs, and only to open his mouth when singing. He followed my advice, and thanks to his musical tact, and the careless melancholy of his wan and distressed countenance, I succeeded in engaging for him the sympathy of the Marchioness, if not her love. I directed toward Robert, the unsatisfied affection which I feared would clasp round Rodolphe for support. Do you understand me?"

"Perfectly: proceed."

"Robert and the Marchioness d'Harville only met at my house, once a week, at musical concerts. The melancholy Adonis sighed, whispered a few broken words, slipt a few billet-doux into her hands. I was more in dread of his epistolary efforts than of his conversation. But a female is always indulgent toward the first declaration which she receives; and the Marchioness, fortunately, was not disgusted. The downcast swain craved a rendezvous; but his idol had unfortunately more principle than love, or rather not love enough to forget her principle. Unknown to herself, there existed in her heart a remembrance of Rodolphe, which combatted with the feeble flame which the sighs of her dejected admirer had kindled; a flame more imaginary than real, fanned only by the fancied misfortunes of Mr. Charles Robert, and my exaggerated praises of the brainless Apollo. In short, Clemence, subdued by the suicidal despondency of her worshipper, appointed a day for the long wished interview."

"Had she made you her *confidante*?"

"She had merely confessed to me her fondness for Mr. Robert; no more: but he, delighted with his extreme good fortune, informed me of it, without mentioning the time or place of the meeting."

"How did you obtain that information?"

"By my orders, Karl watched the lover; on the second day, he drove to an obscure street, rue du Temple, and alighted at a house of miserable appearance, where he remained about two hours, and then departed. My deputy watched in vain for the Marchioness; and I learned the next day, from the disappointed

swain that she had broken her engagement. I advised him to redoub'e, if possible, his despair, and reinforce his artillery of sighs, groans, and despondent looks. He finally extorted from Clemence's compassion another interview, which was broken like the first; although on this occasion, her courage sustained her till she reached the door. You see how the Marchioness struggles; and why? because a tenderness for Rodolphe is still lurking in her bosom; and that is the cause of my uneasiness. To night the Marchioness has made an engagement to meet Mr. Charles Robert to-morrow; and I doubt not that she will go. The Duke de Lucenay ridiculed the young man so unmercifully, that the Marchioness, compassionating his humiliation, yielded through sympathy, what could not be forced from her love; and I repeat to you that she will keep her word."

"What do you propose to do?"

"Robert is so incapable of appreciating the motives which have led the Marchioness to grant him this meeting, that he will conduct in such a manner as to inspire Clemence with incurable disgust; who is moved by no love, no passion, no motive, but a sort of charitable interest; and will not for an instant, during the interview, forget her obligations to her husband. The result of it will be, that a decided aversion to Mr. Charles Robert will assume the place of her present compassion; and her heart being entirely unoccupied, her passion for Rodolphe will revive again."

"Well?"

"I wish that she shall be for ever ruined and disgraced in the estimation of the Prince. I have no doubt that, sooner or later, he will return the Marchioness's love. I wish to expose the Marchioness in such a manner, that a knowledge of her unpardonable breach of fidelity and decorum, will reach Rodolphe's ears."

"Do you wish, then, that her husband should be made acquainted with this rendezvous?"

"Yes, this very night. From some intimations which Clemence has dropped, his jealousy is already awakened; but he is ignorant of his rival. It is now midnight: we will leave the ball. You can step into the nearest cafe and write a note to the Marquis d'Harville, of this appointment for to-morrow, at one o'clock, 17 rue du Temple—the result I will leave for your imagination."

"It is an abominable stratagem," said the brother, coolly.

"I must confess that I did not anticipate scruples from you."

"I will do what you desire; but my opinion remains unchanged of the meanness of the action."

"But you consent, nevertheless?"

"Yes: the Marquis d'Harville shall this night be informed of what you desire. But it seems to me that there is some one behind that hedge: did you not hear a motion?" said Tom, interrupting himself, and speaking in a low tone.

"Look, I beg of you," said Sarah anxiously.

Tom arose, and went to the other side of the hedge; but Rodolphe had disappeared through the door into the supper-room.

"I was mistaken," said Tom, returning. "I do not believe," continued he, "that there is the least ground for apprehension as far as the Marchioness is concerned. Rodolphe has certain fixed principles which he will never infringe. That young girl whom he removed to his farm in the country, whose wants he is ministering to, and whose education he superintends; from the frequent visits which he pays her, excites in my mind much more alarm. I know not who she is, but her uncommon beauty, and the disguise which Rodolphe assumed in order to remove her to the farm, the increasing interest which he manifests in her welfare, all indicate that she is the chief obstacle which opposes our projects. I have collected information respecting the habits of the girl, and the people with whom she associates on the farm. It will be necessary to act with extreme prudence. Chance has sent back to me that horrid woman we encountered in the *tapis-franc*. Her familiarity with people of the class of the brigand who attacked us, will be of great service. I have arranged everything, and there can be no proof against us. Besides, if the creature belongs, as she seems, to the lower class of society, she will not hesitate between the offers which we make, and the most brilliant fate which she can anticipate from Rodolphe, who, it seems, has preserved his incognito. In short, the affair will be settled definitely to-morrow."

"These difficulties being overcome, the success of our great plan will be secured."

"There will be still much to contend against."

"Confess that it will have one chance more, if carried into execution at the same time that Rodolphe is overwhelmed with the scandalous conduct of the Marchioness, and the disappearance of this creature, in whom he feels so deep an interest."

"I believe so: but if this last hope fails I shall then be free," said Tom, looking at Sarah with a sombre air.

"Free! What do you mean?"

"I hope that you will then no longer renew the entreaties which have twice suspended my revenge." Then, indicating with his glance the crape on his hat, and the black gloves on his hands, said in a sinister manner, "I have worn these mourning badges for sixteen years, and will never leave them, except——"

Sarah, whose features wore an expression of involuntary fear, said, "I tell you that you shall be free, for then the sanguine confidence which has sustained me through such varied circumstances, because it has been justified by events beyond human foresight, will abandon me entirely; but I wish to shun every danger that will defeat my hopes. Success often follows from the most trifling causes. Perhaps but some small obstacle only, now intervenes between me and my aim. I wish to surmount them all: my means, I grant, are odious. Have I spared myself?" and Sarah raised her voice.

"Silence!" said Tom; "the guests are returning from supper. If we are to inform the Marquis d'Harville of the rendezvous for to-morrow at noon, we must go."

"The late hour of the night at which he receives the note, will indicate to him its importance."

Tom and Sarah now departed from the ball.

CHAPTER XVI..... THE RENDEZVOUS.

Rodolphe considered it of the highest importance, at any hazard, to inform the Marchioness d'Harville of the terrible exposure which threatened her; and he left the ball of the embassador without waiting for the conclusion of the conversation between the Countess and her brother, and was of course ignorant of the plot which they were contriving against Fleur de Marie. With all his zeal, Rodolphe was too late to intimate to the Marchioness her danger. Upon leaving the saloons of the Count of * * *, she had signified her intention of appearing a moment at the ball of the Baroness Nervèl; but overcome with the conflict of emotions to which she had been exposed, she was obliged to retire to her own mansion. It was this circumstance which left her, unwarned, to fall into the snare which had been provided for her. Rodolphe encountered at the ball of the Baroness, de Graün, and most of the company who had enjoyed the hospitality of the embassador. He enjoined upon his charge d'affairs to search through all the apartments for the Marchioness d'Harville, and inform her that the Prince, having information of the greatest importance to communicate to her, would await her arrival at the Hotel d'Harville. After much time spent in searching for the Marchioness, de Graün returned with the information that she could not be found. Rodolphe was profoundly grieved that he could not guard her against the treacherous ambuscade; the calumnies of the Countess would have then made no impression upon the Marquis; but it was already now too late, for the infamous letter dispatched at one o'clock at night, had now reached the hands for which it was intended.

* * * * * *

The next morning the Marquis was slowly pacing the floor of his bed-chamber, which was furnished with great simplicity, having for its only ornaments a complete equipment of modern arms, and a small library of books. It was evident from the appearance of the bed, that the Marquis had not retired during the night for the purpose of sleep, yet the silk counterpane hung in shreds; a chair and a small ebony table were thrown down near the fireplace; upon the carpet were seen the fragments of a tumbler, the tapers crushed, and a candlestick with two branches which had been knocked on to the floor. This confusion in the room seemed to have been caused by some violent struggle. The Marquis d'Harville was about thirty years of age, with an open and manly countenance, and an expression which was generally mild and agreeable; but his face was now livid and distorted; he had not undressed during the night; his neck was bare, his vest unbuttoned, and his shirt was torn and spotted with blood, and his dark hair, which usually fell in curls, now hung stiff and dishevelled over his pale brow. After walking for a long time with folded arms, his head down, his glance fixed and inflamed, he suddenly stopped before the fire, which was nearly extinguished, notwithstanding the severe temperature of the night, and took from the mantelpiece the letter, which he reperused by the dull light of the winter morning with the most excited attention.

"To-morrow, at one o'clock, your wife will go to No. 17, rue du Temple, for an interview of love: follow her, and you will learn all. Happy husband!"

As he read these words, which in the course of that weari some night he had read time and again, his lips, blue with cold seemed to spell letter by letter its fatal import!

At this moment the door opened, and a footman, gray with age, and having a good and honest face, entered. The Marquis turned his head abruptly, without changing his position, still holding the letter in his hands. "What do you want?" said he in a harsh tone to the servant, who was contemplating the disorder of the room with a fixed look of surprise and amazement.

"Blood on your shirt, my lord! you must have injured yourself. Why did you not ring for me as usual, when——"

"Leave me!"

"But, my lord, you cannot be conscious of your condition. The fire is out and the day is excessively cold; and you are exposed, especially after——"

"Hold your tongue, and leave me!"

"But, my lord, you gave orders," continued the servant, trembling, "for Mr. Doublet to be here at half-past ten; and he is now in attendance, with the notary."

"It is true," said the Marquis bitterly, and recovering his self-possession: "when people are rich, they must attend to business. It is delightful to be rich! Ask Mr. Doublet to walk into my study."

"He is there, sir."

"Give me my clothes; I will be with him in a moment."

"But, my lord——"

"Do what I tell you, Joseph;" then added, in a milder tone, "Has my wife arisen?"

"I have not heard yet the Marchioness's bell."

"When she rings, let me know it."

"Yes, sir."

"Tell Philip to come and assist you."

"But, my lord, let me arrange the room," replied Joseph, in a sad tone; "the servants might perceive this disorder, and might suspect the cause."

"And if they should suspect the real cause, it would be an awful exposure, would it not?" said the Marquis, with a tone of bitter irony.

"Thank Heaven, my lord, no one suspects it."

"No one; no, not a person," said the Marquis, with a melancholy air.

While Joseph was arranging the disorder into which the furniture had been thrown, the Marquis went to the collection of arms before alluded to, and examined them attentively with a gesture of gloomy satisfaction, and said to Joseph:

"I am sure you have forgotten to clean the fowling-pieces which are above stairs."

"You have never spoken to me respecting it," said Joseph, with a look of surprise.

"I have frequently, but you have forgotten it."

"I assure you, my lord——"

"They must be in a fine condition!"

"It is hardly a month, my lord, since they were brought from the gunsmith's."

"No matter. As soon as I am dressed, bring down the gun-case: I shall go a-hunting to-morrow or next day, and I wish to see if the arms are in order."

"I will bring them down immediately."

After the room had been arranged, another footman entered to assist Joseph.

After completing his toilet, the Marquis entered the study, where Mr. Doublet, his steward, was waiting for him, with a notary's clerk.

"Here is the instrument which we have come to read to you. Nothing remains to be done, except the witnessing of your signature."

"Have you read it, Mr. Doublet?"

"Yes, sir."

"That will be sufficient: I will sign it." He affixed his signature, and the clerk left the room.

"With this acquisition, my lord," said Mr. Doublet, with a satisfied air, "your income from productive real estate will be no less than 126,000 francs. Do you know, my lord, that such an income as that from real estate is very rare?"

"I am a very happy man, am I not, Mr. Doublet? 126,000 francs income from landed property! there can be no happiness comparable with that!"

"Without mentioning cash in hand, funds in bank, and without mentioning——"

"Certainly; without mentioning a thousand other felicities!"

"God be praised! my lord, you want nothing. You have youth, health, goodness—every excellent thing combined; and among them," said Mr. Doublet, smiling, "or rather at their head, I place that of being the husband of the Marchioness, and the father of a charming little girl, beautiful as a cherub."

The Marquis d'Harville cast a glance upon the steward: we despair attempting to describe the tone of wild irony with which he said to Mr. Doublet, slapping him familiarly on the shoulder: "With 126,000 francs for an income, a wife like mine, and a child as beautiful as a cherub, nothing can be left to wish for in this world: is it not so, Mr. Doublet?"

"Oh, sir," replied the steward artlessly, "nothing remains to be desired, except long life to enjoy it all; to see your daughter married, and to become yourself a grandfather: this is what I wish with all my heart; and that your wife, the Marchioness, may become a grandmother and a great-grandmother."

"I am fond of your society, Mr. Doublet: your head is always filled with Philemon and Baucis, and your mouth full of kind sayings and *apropos* observations."

"You are too kind, my lord. Have you any orders?"

"Nothing: ah! however, how much money have you in the safe?"

"19,300 and a few francs, for the present month, my lord; without counting the funds in bank."

"You will bring me this morning ten thousand francs in gold, and give them to Joseph, if I should happen to be out."

"This morning?"

"Yes."

"In one hour the money will be here. Have you any other orders?"

"No."

"126,000 francs income, in bags—in bags," repeated the steward, as he was departing. "It has been a fine day for me, my lord: I was afraid that this farm, which suited me so well, would escape us. Your servant, my lord."

"Farewell, Mr. Doublet."

Hardly had the steward left, when the Marquis d'Harville fell back in his arm-chair, in a paroxysm of grief. He leaned his elbows on the writing-table, and buried his face in his hands: for the first time since the receipt of the fatal letter, he wept aloud.

"Oh!" said he, "cruel sport of destiny, which has made me rich! Can this gold save me from shame, Clemence from infamy—an infamy which will stain my daughter's brow? Shall I nerve myself to prevent this exposure? ought I to have pity for her?" Then, lifting his head, with his eyes flashing, and his teeth convulsively closed, he exclaimed in a deep voice, "No, no! blood! I must have blood! the terrible always extinguishes the ridiculous. The wretch! I understand now her aversion: the faithless woman!" And stopping, as if struck with a sudden pang—"Her aversion! Ah! I have too long known the cause: I am her fear, her dread, her abhorrence!" After a long silence, he added: "Am I to blame? must she disgrace me on that account? instead of her hatred, do I not deserve her compassion? No! blood! the blood of both of them! for she must have disclosed to him the whole." At this thought, the fury of the Marquis knew no bounds: he raised his clenched fists; he passed his burning hands over his eyes; but feeling the necessity of assuming tranquillity in the presence of the servants, he returned to his sleeping apartment, and found Joseph there.

"Well, those guns?"

"Here they are, my lord, in an excellent condition."

"I will examine them. Has my wife rang?"

"I do not know, my lord."

"Go and inquire."

The servant left the room.

The Marquis d'Harville hastened to take from the case a small powder-flask, a few bullets and some caps; after which he locked up the case, and retained the key. He then went to his collection of arms, and selected a pair of pocket-pistols, loaded them, and placed them in the pocket of his coat.

At this moment Joseph entered the room.

"My lord, the Marchioness has arisen."

"Has she called for her carriage?"

"No, my lord; Mademoiselle Juliette told the coachman in my presence, that the Marchioness, if she had occasion to go out, would walk."

"Very well. Oh! I forgot; if I go a hunting, it will be to-morrow, or the day after. Tell William to examine the green *briska* this morning. Do you hear?"

"Yes, sir; do you wish for your cane?"

"No. Is there not a carriage-stand near?"

"There is one at the corner of rue de Lille."

After a moment's hesitation, the Marquis continued:

"Go and ask Mademoiselle Juliette, if the Marchioness is to be seen."

Joseph went out.

"Come; it is as good a spectacle as any other. Yes, I will go to her rooms, and observe the mild and perfidious mask, under which she hides her adulterous thoughts. I shall hear her

lips lie, while I read the crime stamped on her depraved heart. Yes; it will be curious to see how a wife looks and speaks, who is about to imprint upon her husband's honor that stain which only blood can wash away. She will look at me with those eyes as ever mild, with a smile on her lip, and purity on her brow; she will cast on me the same glance which falls upon her daughter, when she kisses her on the forehead, and teaches her lisping tongue to pray. 'The face the mirror of the soul!'" and he shrugged his shoulders in contempt. "The purer the face, the blacker the soul. *She* proves it: Oh, horror! with what cool and insolent contempt she must have seen me, deceived by that false mirror; and lavishing smiles, kindness, love—all that the heart can yield, while she was caressing my rival in her arms! At the very time too, I doubt not, when my heart was melted into more than the softness of the purest love, by the consciousness that, as a young mother, she treasured within herself, my life, my soul, my child! No, no," said the Marquis, his rage returning, "I will not see the wretch; I should betray myself; I should lose my revenge!"

Upon leaving the room, instead of going to the apartments of the Marchioness, he said to her waiting-maid: "You may tell the Marchioness that I desired to speak with her this morning, but as I am obliged to go out for a few moments, it is of no consequence; if perchance she may desire to take breakfast with me, I shall return by noon."

"Under the impression that I shall return soon, she will think herself more free to act," said the Marquis to himself, as he advanced to the carriage-stand near his house.

"By the hour, driver."

"Yes, sir; it is half-past eleven; where will you go?"

"Rue de Belle Chasse, corner of rue Saint Dominique, by the side of a garden wall, where you will wait."

"Yes, sir."

The Marquis closed the blinds; the horses started; and the carriage was soon in front of the Hotel d'Harville. No one could leave the house, without being seen by the Marquis from this position.

The rendezvous of his wife was appointed at one: his bloodshot eye was burningly fixed on the door of his house, as he waited in agonizing suspense. His thoughts were carried away by such a tumult and conflict of passion, that time appeared to fly with incredible speed. Twelve o'clock was now striking from the steeple of Saint Thomas d'Aquin, when the door of the Hotel d'Harville was slowly opened, and the Marchioness came out.

"Already!" exclaimed the husband. "How prompt she is! She fears that *he* may become impatient by waiting," said the Marquis, with a fearful irony of tone.

The cold was severe, the pavement dry. Clemence wore a black bonnet covered with a blonde-lace veil of the same color; an immense Cashmere shawl of dark blue fell to the bottom of her dress, which slightly raising as she crossed the street, disclosed thereby a faultless ancle, and a fairy foot, in a Turkish satin bottine. Strange as it may appear, the Marquis d'Harville, agitated by the most tumultuous passions, the most terrible emotions that can shake the soul, could not restrain himself from noticing and admiring the foot of his wife. Such is one of the freaks of the human mind! But this disclosure also awoke the gnawing of jealousy and pride, and his excited fancy pictured in vivid colors, the scene of mutual endearments which would follow this disgraceful interview. For the first time in his life, he felt at his heart that peculiar physical pain—sharp, cutting, penetrating and throbbing—which mental agony not unfrequently produces. It drew from him a hollow cry, and he could scarcely assume a calm voice, to say to the driver:

"Do you see that lady with a blue shawl and black bonnet, who is walking by the side of the wall?"

"Yes, sir."

"Drive slow, and follow her; if she goes to the stand where I found you and takes a carriage, follow it."

"Yes, sir; 'twill be fine sport that we shall have, will it not, Monsieur?"

The Marchioness d'Harville went directly to the stand, and seated herself in one of the hacks.

The two carriages started.

After some time, to the great surprise of the Marquis, his driver took the street that led to the church of Saint Thomas d'Aquin, and suddenly stopped.

"What are you doing now?" asked the Marquis.

"The lady has gone into the church, sir. Upon my word, she has a very neat foot and ancle. What fine sport this is!"

A thousand new thoughts chased through the Marquis's mind; his first idea was, that his wife perceiving that she was followed, had entered the church as a feint to deceive her pursuers; he then doubted whether the letter which he had received, was anything but a base calumny. If Clemence was guilty, why this affectation of piety? Did it not amount to a sacrilegious derision of the Deity? The light of hope flashed for a moment across the despair of the Marquis; so inconsistent was an act of religious devotion with the crime of which she had been accused.

This consoling illusion, however, was of but short continuance. The driver stooped down and said to him: "The little lady is going back to her carriage."

"Follow it."

"Yes, master; it is very amusing—very funny."

The hack passed the quays, the Hotel de Ville, rue Saint Avoye: in short, it reached rue du Temple.

"Master," said the driver, turning to the Marquis; "the fellow has drawn up at No. 17; we are at No. 13. Shall I stop here?"

"Yes.'

"Master, the little lady with the nice foot, has just entered the alley of No. 17."

"Open the carriage door."

"Yes, master."

In the course of a second, the Marquis was entering the alley on the footsteps of his wife.

CHAPTER XVII. . . . . AN ANGEL.

The Marchioness entered the house.

Attracted by their curiosity, Madam Pipelet, Alfred and the oyster-woman, were grouped together on the threshold of the lodge. The hall was so dark, that any one entering from the door, could not see the staircase. The Marchioness was obliged to address herself to Madam Pipelet.

"Mr. Charles, madam?" said she in an assumed and trembling voice.

"Mr. who?" repeated the portière, pretending not to have heard, in order to give Alfred and the oyster-woman an opportunity to pry under the veil of the unfortunate woman.

"I asked for Mr. Charles, madam," said the Marchioness, in a still more frightened tone; and inclining her head, in order to escape the impertinent curiosity of the menials.

"Oh! Mr. Charles: I understand you, now; you spoke so low at first, that I did not hear you. Well, my little lady, since you desire to see Mr. Charles—a handsome young man for all that—go up stairs and turn into the first door."

The Marchioness, overwhelmed with confusion, placed her foot on the first step.

"Ite, he, he!" the old woman giggled: "it seems to be in good earnest to-day! vive le noce! go ahead!"

"After all, that Commander is a chap of some taste; his sweet heart is no worm eater," said the oyster-woman.

If her retreat would not have again exposed her to an encounter with these creatures, the Marchioness, overcome with shame and fear, would have instantly departed; she made a vigorous effort, and arrived at the top of the stairs.

What was her surprise and amazement to find herself confronted, face to face, with the Grand Duke of Gerolstein; who, placing a purse in her hand with the greatest precipitation and fear, said:

"Your husband knows all, and is following you." At this very moment, the sharp voice of Madam Pipelet was heard to say: "Where are you going, sir?"

"It is the Marquis, himself!" added Rodolphe, pushing the Marchioness toward the stairs of the third floor: "go directly up to the attic; you have come here to relieve a poor family by the name of Morel."

"You will have to pass over me," exclaimed Madam Pipelet, "before you go up stairs without telling whom you wish to see;" and she arrested the passage of the Marquis: he had seen his wife talking with the portière, and had halted for a moment at the entrance of the alley.

"I am in company with the lady who just entered," said the Marquis.

"Oh! that is quite another affair: you may go up," said Madam Pipelet.

Having heard an unusual noise, Mr. Charles Robert had slightly opened his door. Rodolphe quickly entered into the Commander's room and locked the door upon both, the very moment when the Marquis d'Harville had reached the landing in front of it; for he feared in spite of the obscurity of the stairway, that his friend would recognize him; and he had taken this precaution in order to avoid him.

Mr. Charles Robert, magnificently enveloped in his embroid-

ered dressing-gown, and trimmed and tasselled velvet cap, remained in the attitude in which Rodolphe had first found him, with a stare of blank and stupefied amazement on his meaningless face. The Prince had entirely escaped his notice at the ball, and was at this time attired in very ordinary apparel.

"What is the meaning of this, sir?" at length exclaimed the Commander.

"Silence!" said Rodolphe, with an expression of voice and glance of eye, that Mr. Robert did not deem prudent to disobey.

A loud noise like the sound of a body falling and rolling down several steps, now broke upon the silence of the staircase.

"The wretch has killed her!" exclaimed Rodolphe, in an agony of alarm.

"Killed! who? What is going on," whispered the Commander, pale with fear.

Without answering him, Rodolphe half-opened the door; he saw the urchin, Tortillard, limping down the stairs in great haste, and holding in his hand the red silk purse which Rodolphe had just given to the Marchioness d'Harville. Nothing could be heard but the light foot-fall of the Marchioness, and the heavier step of her husband, as he followed her up the highest flight of stairs. Perplexed by the discovery of the purse in Tortillard's hand, yet somewhat reassured, Rodolphe said to Mr. Robert, "Do not leave this room, or you will ruin everything."

"But, who are you, sir?" said the Commander with an air of wrathy impatience: "what right have you to control my conduct? what does all this signify?"

"It signifies, sir, that the Marquis d'Harville has been informed of his wife's intended interview with you; that he has tracked her footsteps to this house, and is now following her up stairs."

"Good God!" exclaimed Mr. Charles Robert, joining his hands in affright; "but what is she going to do up stairs?"

"That is none of your business, sir: remain in your room and do not presume to leave it, until the portière intimates that it will be safe for you to go."

Leaving Mr. Robert as much overcome with fear as he was stupefied with amazement, Rodolphe went down stairs and entered the lodge.

"Well, look here! it is growing warm—it is growing quite warm," exclaimed Madam Pipelet, with an excited smile: "a gentleman is following the little lady up stairs; it is her husband, without doubt; I smelt it out instantly, and suffered him to pass; he will have a fight with the Commander; it will make a noise in the neighborhood, and crowds of people will come to see the house, as they did No. 36, when a murder was committed there."

"My dear Madam Pipelet, will you confer a great favor upon me?" asked Rodolphe, putting five louis into her palm: "When the little lady comes down, ask her how the poor Morels are? tell her that she is doing a charitable deed in assisting them, as she promised to do, when she made inquiries respecting them."

Madam Pipelet looked alternately at the gold and then at Rodolphe, with great astonishment.

"How, sir! this gold for me? and the little lady—is she not in the Commander's room?"

"The gentleman who followed her, is her husband; being warned in time, she was able to go up to the room of the Morels, with the appearance of affording them relief; do you understand?"

"If I understand, I must help you to cheat the husband? Such business fits me like a glove: ha, ha, ha! One might say, I have been engaged in it all my life."

At this time, the broad-brimmed hat of Mr. Pipelet was discerned, elevating itself in the lodge.

"Anastasie!" said he in a deep bass voice: "Anastasie! you have no respect for anything human or divine! you are like Mr. Cesar Bradamanti. There are certain jests which should never be mentioned even in the recesses of confidential intimacy."

"Come, come, old beloved; don't be prudish, and don't stare your eyes open in that manner; you know that I was only in jest, for there is not a man in the world can boast of —— in short, if I do a favor for these people, it is only to oblige our new tenant who is so good." Then turning to Rodolphe, she said, "you will see how elegantly I will do the business: stand in the corner there behind the curtain: I hear them coming."

Rodolphe hastened to secrete himself. The Marquis and the Marchioness were descending the stairs, and the Marquis had offered his arm to his wife: when he arrived opposite the lodge, his features expressed profound happiness, mingled with confusion and surprise. Clemence was calm, but very pale.

"Well! my good little lady," exclaimed Madam Pipelet, coming out of the lodge; "have you seen the poor Morels? Isn't it enough to break one's heart! You have done an excellent act. I told you they were much to be pitied, the last time that you came to ask about them. Depend upon it, you cannot do too much for such honest people: can she, Alfred?"

Alfred, whose rigid ideas of propriety were shocked at participating in this plot against marital rights, replied vaguely by a sort of negative grunt.

"Alfred" continued Madam Pipelet, "has his customary cramp in the stomach, and that is the reason that his voice is so low; if it were not for that, he would tell you, as I do, that those people pray for God's blessing on you, my lady."

The Marquis d'Harville looked at his wife with a glance of joyful admiration.

"An angel! an angel!" said he. "How could I believe such calumny!"

"You may well call her an angel, sir; and a good angel into the bargain."

"Let us go, my dear," said the Marchioness, completely prostrated with the variety of emotions she had passed through since entering this door.

"I have need, Clemence," said the Marquis, leaving the alley; "I have need of pity and forgiveness."

"Who is not in need of it?" said the young wife, with a sigh.

Rodolphe came from his retreat, profoundly moved with a scene which had so much that was terrible in its commencement—so much that was laughable in its conclusion. Few dramas had ever excited such numerous and varied emotions.

"Well!" said Madam Pipelet: "I think I have fixed that husband nicely; he would make a saint of his wife, poor dear man! But your furniture, Mr. Rodolphe: why has it not been brought?"

"I am going to attend to it now; but you can go, Madam Pipelet, and tell the Commander, that he is at liberty now to go where he pleases."

"Sure enough, he seems to have taken his apartments for the purpose of making himself ridiculous. Serves him right with his miserable nasty twelve francs a month."

Rodolphe now left the house.

"Look here, Alfred," said Madam Pipelet; "now is the Commander's turn: shall I not have a laugh?"

She went up to the room of Mr. Charles Robert, and rang the bell. The disappointed inamorato opened the door.

"Commander," and Anastasia lifted her hand to her wig, in military fashion, "I have presented myself to release you from your prison-house; the husband and wife have gone away, arm-and-arm, from your beard; yes, from your very nasal organ. However, you have made a very close shave of it; and—if you will permit the category—have escaped by the skin of your teeth. You ought to be much obliged to Mr. Rodolphe, for without him, Commander," and she again touched her wig, "you would have had—if you will excuse another category—a plumb in your military crop."

"Is it the slender gentleman, with the mustache, that you call Mr. Rodolphe?"

"The same."

"And who is that man?"

"That man!" exclaimed Madam Pipelet, in an angry tone. "He is as good as another, yes, as two others; he is a tenant of ours, a travelling commercial gentleman. He has but one room, and does not know how to be stingy, like some people who have two; he gave me six francs for taking care of his room. Yes, six francs at the first word, without chaffering half an hour."

"Very good, very good. Here, take my key."

"Shall I make a fire to-morrow, Commander?"

"No."

"And the day after to-morrow?"

"No, no."

"Well, Commander, don't you remember that I told you that I didn't believe you would get your money's worth?"

Mr. Charles Robert threw a look of contempt upon the portière, and left the house, in a state of some perplexity, to know how a "travelling commercial gentleman," should have become involved in his intrigue with the Marchioness d'Harville.

At the time he was leaving the alley, he met with Tortillard, who was limping into it.

"Is that you, you little rogue?" said Madam Pipelet.

"Has not a one-eyed woman inquired for me?" asked the urchin.

"Who! Chouette? No, little monster. Why should she come after you?"

"Why? to take me into the country, to be sure," said the monkey, balancing himself at the door of the lodge.

"And your master?"

"Father asked him to let me go into the country—into the country," repeated the son of Bras-rouge, singing out his words, and drumming on the window of the lodge.

"Will you stop, scoundrel? You will break my glass. But here comes a hack."

"Good, good! it's Chouette," said the urchin: "what luck! I shall take a ride." And so it was; for through the window of the carriage the unearthly countenance of the one-eyed hag was seen.

She beckoned to Tortillard, who ran toward her.

The driver opened the door, and the urchin entered the carriage. Chouette was not alone. In the other corner of the carriage, wrapped up in an old cloak, with a fur collar, which partly concealed his features, with a black silk cap hanging over his eyebrows, was seen the hideous countenance of the Schoolmaster. The red lids, exposed eyes, white and motionless, without any pupils; and the hideousness of his furrowed face, even in its best estate, was now further increased by a sort of blue and red leprosy, the effect of the cold upon the scars.

"Come, lovely monikin," said Chouette, "lay yourself down on my husband's feet; it will keep them warm." And Tortillard crouched like a dog at the feet of the Schoolmaster.

"Now," said the driver; "to the farm of Bouqueval: is it not, Chouette? You shall see how I can drive a cab."

"See that you keep your horse warm," said the Schoolmaster.

"Be tranquil, old mirrorless one; he will run as far as the barrière."

"Shall I give you some advice?" said the Schoolmaster.

"Yes," said the driver.

"Drive fast whenever you see an excise officer; he might recognize you. I have seen you rambling about the barrières."

"I'll keep my eye open," said the other, jumping on to his seat.

From the preceding conversation, the reader will perceive that the driver was a suitable coadjutor for any undertaking in which the Schoolmaster and Chouette might be now engaged.

The carriage left rue du Temple. Two hours after, about nightfall, the hack with its passengers stopped before a wooden cross, that indicated a deserted road, leading to the farm of Bouqueval, where Goualeuse now was under the protection of Madam George.

END OF PART THE SECOND.

PART THE THIRD.

CHAPTER I. ..... AN IDYL.

Five o'clock was striking from the church of the small village of Bouqueval. The temperature of the evening was cold and severe; but the sky was serene, and the sun, slowly sinking behind the large and leafless trees which crowned the heights of Ecouen, tinged the horizon with purple, and cast pale and oblique rays over the vast plains hardened by the frost. In the country, each season has its charms: at one time the fields, covered with snow like an immense expanse of alabaster, sparkle with the rays of the sun beneath a pale, cold sky: at another time, as night is falling upon the landscape, the belated farmer is seen wending his way to his home, himself and horse clothed in the same snowy garment; cold is the night, keen the air, the path obscure; but yonder, among those leafless trees, shine the bright windows of his cheerful home. The high brick chimney sends forth its cloud of smoke, which warns the laborer that a blazing fire and a frugal supper await his arrival. A gay and cheerful evening follows; a night of warm and quiet sleep, although the storm rages without, and dogs of neighboring farms respond to each other's howling. Again, we have the landscape of a winter morning: the snow has vanished from the trees; icicles depend so stainless, that their glittering spires tinge not the sun's pure rays; the hares start from their lurking-places, the partridge drums in the woods, the sheep shake their tinkling bells, searching for the meagre herbage that may still be found in the sheltered declivities; and the song of the shepherd, wrapped in his gray mantle, is occasionally heard. Sometimes the woodlands become vocal with the distant notes of the horn and the baying of hounds, while the startled deer leaps from the thicket and flies over the plain. The music of the chase draws nearer, spotted hounds emerge from the wood, and follow with their nose the footsteps of the flying hind. Silence once more resumes her dominion, and the praise of voiceless nature streams heavenward adoringly.

Such rural scenes abound in the neighborhood of Bouqueval; for, although almost in the environs of Paris, it is embosomed in a wilderness, and can only be approached by means of narrow lanes and by-paths. The farm of Bouqueval, where Fleur de Marie now resided, was during the summer months enveloped in verdure; but it now appeared in the middle of the plain, sheltered only by the leafless branches of the trees. The small and winding rivulet, now frozen over, lay like a silvered ribbon unrolled upon the meadow; cows were occasionally cropping the stinted herbage as they were driven to their stalls, and swarms of pigeons, brought home by the approach of night, alighted on the pointed roof of the dovecote. A cart, drawn by powerful horses whose glossy hair and blue collars were adorned with red trappings and with bells, was bringing sheaves of corn from stacks on the plain. This heavy conveyance entered by one of the gates into the farm-yard, in which a flock of sheep were reposing. Both man and brute seemed eager to escape from the inclemency of the atmosphere to their comfortable abodes: the horses neighed joyfully at the sight of the stable, the sheep were bleating lustily at the gates of their fold, and the laborerers cast longing glances into the windows of the kitchen, where their supper was preparing. Extreme order and neatness was displayed in all the appurtenances of the farm. The ploughs, harrows, carts, and agricultural utensils, all of the most improved model, were thoroughly painted, and neatly disposed under ample sheds, where the carman came also to suspend the harness which he had just removed from the horses. The farm-yard was neat and well arranged, offering to the eye none of those repulsive sights which are so often seen on the best arranged farms of Beauce and of Brie. The poultry-yard, inclosed by a green railing, harbored all the feathered tribe, which entered it by a small gate opening on to the fields. Without further details, we state in brief that this farm was regarded in the neighborhood as a model for all similar establishments, not only on account of the excellence of its management and the productiveness of its soil, but also on account of the happiness and morality of the large number of laborers employed upon it.

We shall have occasion shortly to explain the cause of its prosperity; in the meanwhile we will conduct the reader through the small gate which leads into the poultry-yard, and which was as neat as any other part of the premises, with its trough of water, through which a stream, pure and uncongealed, circulated. A singular flutter now prevailed among the winged inmates of the yard: the hens flew cackling from their roosts, the turkeys spread their plumage and gobbled, the Guinea-hens struck up their shrill quack, and the pigeons flew from their cote and alighted on the ground.

The appearance of Fleur de Marie in the yard was the cause of all this commotion.

Greuze or Watteau never could have conceived cheeks more beautiful than those of Goualeuse, if the lily had triumphed less than the rose: yet—in spite of the paleness of her face—the expression of her eye, the perfection of her features, the *ensemble* of her person, were worthy of the genius of either of those distinguished artists.

The small round cap which Fleur de Marie wore, exposed the forehead and light-brown locks; and, like other peasant-girls in the neighborhood of Paris, a red handkerchief displayed above the cap floated gracefully upon her shoulders—a head-dress more beautiful and picturesque than any of which Italy or Switzerland can boast. A scarf of white cambric crossed over her bosom, and was partly hid by the top of her apron; a gown of coarse blue cotton cloth displayed the perfect symmetry of her form; her arms were bare, and her small feet, hid in shoes trimmed with lamb's wool, completed her costume of extreme simplicity, which harmonized so admirably with the *naïve* grace of Fleur de Marie's beauty. Holding with one hand the two corners of her apron, she took from it with the other hand the seed which she scattered among her winged favorites. A dove of purest white, with beak and feet of purple, more familiar than the rest, alighted on her shoulder. The young girl, as if habituated to this friendly salutation of her pet, continued to distribute the grain to the remainder of her flock; but turning her enchanting profile, greeted with her rosy lips the beautiful emblem of innocence upon her shoulder, as the last rays of the sinking sun fell upon this rural picture.

CHAPTER II. ..... ANXIETIES.

While Fleur de Marie was engaged in these domestic avocations, Madam George and the Abbé Laporte, the curate of Bouqueval, were seated by the fire in the small parlor in the farm-house, and conversing upon a subject always interesting to them, the health and character of their young protege. The

old curate, with a thoughtful air, his head low, and his elbows on his knees, was stretching his trembling hands toward the fire. Madam George, engaged in sewing, occasionally cast a glance to the Abbé as if waiting for him to speak.

After a moment of silence, the Abbé said:

"You are right, Madam George. We must inform Mr. Rodolphe, if he asks any questions about Fleur de Marie. She may perhaps confess to him, what she conceals from us."

"If that is your opinion, sir, I will write this very evening to the direction which he gave me, to the alley of Veuves."

"Poor child!" said the Abbé; "she should be happy. What sorrow is it, which can so seriously affect her health?"

"Nothing can divert her from this incurable sadness; not even her application to her studies, has power to interest her mind."

"She has indeed made extraordinary progress, during the short time we have devoted to her education."

"Indeed, she has, sir. She has learned to write beautifully, to read with fluency, and has become such an adept with figures, that she now assists me in keeping the accounts of the farm; and in addition, the dear little one devotes herself with so much energy to assisting me, in every department, that I am constantly fearful that the fatigue will injure her health."

"The negro physician has fortunately reassured us as to the cause of the slight cough, which so seriously alarmed us at first."

"Mr. David attached himself to her with the most devoted kindness and attention. Indeed, she seems to possess the faculty of enlisting the affection of every one. There is not a person connected with the farm, but esteems and loves her. The most coarse, the most heartless being, could not but be moved by the sweetness of her disposition, and that winning spirit of contrition, which seems to be soliciting forgiveness from every one. Poor child! as if she was the only one in the world who needed pardon!"

After a few moments of thought, the Abbé proceeded: "Did you not tell me that her melancholy had increased since the visit which Madam Dubreuil, the farmière of the Duke de Lucenay, paid to you here about the time of All-Saint's day?"

"Yes, sir; I think I have remarked it more since that occasion; and yet Madam Dubreuil and her daughter Clara—a model of sweetness and frankness—participated in the general interest felt for Fleur de Marie, and daily lavished upon her tokens of their esteem. You know that on Sundays, our friends at Arnouville either visit us, or we them; and it seems to me, that each visit increases the sadness of Fleur de Marie, although Clara is already attached to her with all the affection of a sister."

"It is, indeed, very mysterious, Madam George. Her present life is a paradise compared with her former one, and she certainly cannot be suspected of ingratitude."

"By no means. Her gratitude appears to me to be too excessive. She even attempts by every means in her power, to earn her living; to compensate by her services, for the hospitality showed toward her. Unless I insist upon it, she prefers to wear dresses as coarse as those of the ordinary peasantry: but it is impossible for any dress to disguise her grace and her beauty."

"Ah! I discern maternal pride," said the priest, smiling.

The eyes of Madam George were suffused with tears. She thought of her son.

The Abbé imagined the cause, and said: "Be of good cheer, my dear madam; the Lord has sent this interesting girl to assuage your grief for his loss; and if you understand, and faithfully perform, the duties of godmother to this child, which you have virtually assumed, you will soon be united to her by a maternal tie. Rodolphe, by rescuing her from the abyss of crime, and turning her footsteps in the paths of virtue, has already discharged the obligations of godfather."

"Do you find her sufficiently well informed to admit her to the holy rite of communion?"

"I intend to-night, while going with her to the parsonage, to inform her that the ceremony will be performed within a fortnight."

"You may, perhaps, one day be present at another ceremony, almost as serious."

"What do you mean?"

"If Marie was loved as much as she deserves to be—if she would distinguish with her favor some good and honest young man; what should prevent her marriage?"

The Abbé shook his head, and replied in a desponding tone: "Her marriage would necessarily involve a full and free disclosure to her betrothed of all her past history; and I fear no love will be found strong enough to survive a knowledge of the stain that rests upon the poor child's name."

"But Mr. Rodolphe is so generous, that a munificent dowry will go with her."

"Alas! Madam George; if Fleur de Marie was conscious that the individual who solicited her hand, was influenced by mercenary motives, she would embrace the most painful fate in preference to such a marriage. Grief, sorrow, recrimination, remorse, would follow from such nuptials."

"Such I fear would be the result, and how deadly to the poor child's peace would be the consciousness, that one throb of shame for her beat in the bosom of her husband. Alas! I fear that a miserable future is before her."

"She has great faults to expiate," said the curate, seriously.

"But, sir," said Madam George, "abandoned at the tender age she was to such corrupt society, before she could distinguish between good and evil; with no friends to whom she could fly, with no resource in the world, no door of escape but self-murder, how can she be responsible for her fate?"

"Conscience should have warned her; besides, it does not appear that she attempted to escape from that abyss. Are charitable souls so rare in Paris?"

"No; thank Heaven, they are not. But how should this poor girl know where to find them! How many refusals, what cruel rebuffs, would have tortured her sensitive spirit, before a pitying heart would have been found! Besides, it was not a passing alms that would have rescued her from such a doom; but a constant stream of kindness and of bounty—an active charity, which would have taken her by the hand and led her from the paths of vice to those of virtue, and sustained her there by advice and encouragement, until she could earn an honest livelihood. Many mothers undoubtedly would have pitied her, but few have taken her to their bosom as a child. Believe me, for I have myself known the pangs of poverty; and but for one of those rare interventions of Providence, such as came too late to Fleur de Marie, I know not what would have been my fate. The poor, brutally repulsed in their first solicitations for relief, believe that pity does not dwell in human hearts; and goaded by wretchedness, they often seek in vice that resource which it is so difficult to find in virtue."

At this moment Goualeuse entered. "Where have you been, my child?" asked Madam George.

"I have been into the fruit-store, after locking the doors of the poultry-yard. The fruit is in excellent order, except some of it, which I removed."

"Why did you not tell Claudine to do it? I fear you have fatigued yourself?"

"Oh, no! madam; it was a pleasure to me. The fragrance of the ripe fruit is a luxury."

"You should some day pay a visit to Marie's fruit-store," said Madam George to the Abbé; "you cannot imagine how much taste she has displayed in the arrangement of it. Garlands of grapes hang in festoons over each kind of fruit, already divided by layers of moss."

"I am sure, sir, you would be pleased," said Marie, ingenuously; "the moss is beautifully relieved by the red apples and the golden pears; and particularly, there are some small love-apples, with such a beautiful blending of red and white, that they look like the heads of wax cherubs in nests of green moss," added she, with an artist-like enthusiasm for her labors.

The curate looked at Madam George with a smile, and then said to Fleur de Marie:

"I have, before this, admired the dairy which is under your direction, and the most fastidious dairy-maid would have good cause to envy you. One of these days I will visit your fruit-store, and your fine apples, and your golden-pairs; and especially the little love-apples, like the heads of wax cherubs in a nest of moss: but the twilight will not last long, and you will scarcely have time to lead me to the parsonage and return again before it is dark. Take your mantle and let us depart, my child. But I fear the cold is too severe; you had better remain at home, and one of the farm boys will accompany me."

"Oh no," said Madam George; "you will distress her by refusing her aid: it is a pleasure for her to assist you in your walk home."

"I should fancy that you were displeased with me, sir," said Goualeuse, raising her large blue eyes to the priest, "if you did not permit me to go home with you as usual."

"Take your mantle then, quickly, and wrap yourself warmly in it."

Fleur de Marie hastened to throw over her shoulders a sort of mantle made of coarse white woollen, with a cape trimmed with black ribbon, and offered her arm to the curate.

"Fortunately, it is not far, and the road is safe. As it is somewhat later than your usual walk, some one will go with you, Marie, if you desire it," said Madam George.

"Oh no; they would think that I am afraid," replied Goualeuse, smiling; "I beg of you, Madam George, not to disturb any one on my account; I shall be able to return before it is dark."

"I will not insist, if you do not desire it; I am thankful there never were seen any vagabonds in this part of the country."

"Were the inhabitants otherwise than most peaceably disposed, I would not accept of the poor girls arm, although it is of great assistance to me."

In a few moments, the Abbé left the farm-house leaning on the arm of Fleur de Marie, who regulated her light movements by the slow and tottering walk of the old man.

They soon arrived near to the deep path where the Schoolmaster, Chouette and Tortillard, were in ambuscade.

CHAPTER III..... THE AMBUSCADE.

The church and parsonage of the village of Bouqueval, were situated about half way up the declivity before described, in the midst of a grove of chestnut trees. Fleur de Marie and the curate had now reached a crooked path, which led to the house of the Abbé, but it was necessary to cross over the deep road which divided the hill diagonally. The Schoolmaster, Chouette and Tortillard, crouching in the excavation of this road, observed the priest and Fleur de Marie descend into the ravine and go out of it by a steep path. The features of the young girl being concealed under the cape of her mantle, Chouette did not recognize her former victim.

"Silence! my man," said the old hag to the Schoolmaster; "the little goslin* and the wild boar† have just crossed the deep road; she must be the one described by the tall man in black; peasant's dress, medium stature, striped gown, woollen mantle, trimmed with a black ribbon; she goes home with the wild boar every night, and returns alone. When she comes back we will fall upon her and carry her to the hack."

"And if the goslin screams, she will be heard from the farm, since you say that the building is visible from this place; for you *can* see," said the Schoolmaster, in a deep voice.

"Yes, the buildings are close by," said Tortillard; "when I climbed the ditch a few moments since, I heard the carmen speaking to their horses in the yard, yonder."

"Then," said the Schoolmaster, after a few moments' pause, "this is what we must do: Tortillard will be on the look-out at the end of the path, and when he sees the goslin, he must go to her and say, 'that he is the son of a poor old woman who has bruised herself by falling into the ravine,' and she will come and assist her."

"I understand you, Fourline—the poor old woman is your Chouette. Well sorboned;‡ you always was the king of big heads: and what shall we do then?"

"You will hide yourself far down in the hollow, where Barbillon is waiting with the hack; I will hide near by, and when Tortillard has brought the goslin, you must stop your groaning and jump on her; with one hand clinch her by the neck and cram the other into her mouth to stop her red rag§ from fluttering."

"Well devised, Fourline: just as we served the woman of the canal Saint Martin, when we set her a-floating, after taking from her the box which she carried under her arm: the same game, is it not?"

"While you hold on to the goslin, Tortillard and I will come to your aid; and between us three, we will tie her up in my cloak and convey her to Barbillon's carriage, and then to the plain of Saint Denis, where the man in black is waiting."

"That is very good, Fourline; there isn't your equal. If I had the dosh, I would give a show of fire-works and red lamps; you are a brave one. Do you hear, you little monkey?" cried the hag, addressing Tortillard; "if you wish to become a great man, listen to the Schoolmaster; he is a king of big heads. By the way," said she, addressing her husband, "did you know that Barbillon is mightily afraid of having the brain fever?"‖

"Why so?"

"He knocked against a man in the dark¶ some time ago, who was the husband of a milk-woman, who came every morning from the country in a wagon drawn by a donkey, to sell milk in the Cité; at the corner of rue Vieille Draperie, near the *tapis-franc* of the ogress."

The son of Bras-rouge, who did not understand the slang language in which this fact was narrated, looked toward Chouette with a face of disappointed curiosity.

"You would like to know what we are speaking about, would you not, my little rogue?"

"To be sure I should."

"If you behave yourself, I will teach you slang one of these days; you will soon be of an age when it will be useful knowledge for you; won't you be glad, Fifi?"

"Yes, I will; and besides, I should rather live with you all the time than with that crazy quack, and pound his drugs, and take care of his spotted horse. I wish I knew where he keeps his ratsbane for men, I would sprinkle his soup with it one of these days."

Chouette laughed approvingly; and pulling Tortillard toward her, said: "Come and kiss mother, loulou; you are a funny little monkey. But how do you know that your master keeps ratsbane for men?"

"I heard him say so one day, when I was concealed in a closet where he keeps his bottles, medicines, and his steel-traps; and where he works with his galipots."

"You heard him say what?"

"I heard him tell a gentleman, to whom he was giving some powders, in a piece of paper, that three of them would put asleep any one that took them, so that they wouldn't wake up, without leaving any marks on them either."

"And who was the gentleman?" asked the Schoolmaster.

"A fine young gentleman, with a black mustache, and a woman's face. He came back afterward, and when he went away, the quack told me to follow him, and see where he went to roost. He entered a house in rue Chaillot. My master had told me, 'to go wherever the gentleman went; and that if he entered a house, to wait and see if he came out; and if he did, follow him again, until he goes into some house and stays; that will prove that he lives there. Then,' said he, 'Tortillard, my boy, twist yourself round till you find out his name; if you do not, I will twist your ears in fine style.'"

"What did you do then?"

"Well, I twisted myself until I found out the name of the pretty gentleman."

"And how did you do that?" asked the Schoolmaster.

"Why, I am no fool. I went into the porter's lodge in the house rue Chaillot, and saw a powdered porter, in a fine yellow coat, trimmed with silver. I said to him, 'My good sir, I came here to get five francs which the master promised to give me, for finding his dog, a little black thing called Trompette; he was a gentleman with a dark face, black mustache, a white great coat, and blue pants; and said that he lived rue Chaillot, No. 11, and that his name was Dupont.' 'The gentleman who lives here,' said the man, 'is my master; and his name is the Viscount de Saint Remy; and there is no dog here but yourself; so march, or I will thrash you in order to teach you better manners than to come round here after five francs.' And he kicked me off of the steps. Never mind," continued Tortillard, philosophically; "never mind, I found out the name of the gentleman with black mustaches, who came to my master to get ratsbane for men; 'tis the Viscount de Saint Remy—my—my—Remy—my—my," singing out the last word, a favorite custom with the heir of Bras-rouge.

"Do you wish me to eat you up, you little love of a monkey?" said Chouette, embracing Tortillard. "You are a cunning rogue and deserve to have me for your mother."

These words produced a wonderful effect upon the deserving Caliban; his face, usually sly and wicked, became at once tender and wamble-cropped; he seemed to take in earnest the maternal demonstrations of Chouette, and he said to her: "And I love you much also, because you kissed me the first time you saw me at the Cœur-Saignant. Since mother's dead, you are the only one who has ever shown any fondness for me; every lady beats and kicks me, as if I were a nasty dog—everybody—even Madam Pipelet, the portière."

"What an unnatural old hag she must be, to kick such a love of a child as you are," said Chouette, as she once more kissed Tortillard, with great affection.

The interesting lad seemed touched with lively gratitude, and he replied:

"You have only to command, in order to see how I will obey you: how I will serve you."

"True! and will you always love me?"

"Always. I wish to remain with you always."

"You are an excellent boy; and we will see what can be done for you."

"Yes, you will lead me round," said the Schoolmaster: "you will say that I am a poor blind man, and that you are my son; we will thus get into houses, and prepare some fine jobs for Chouette. I will show that demon, Rodolphe, who has blinded me, that he has not put an end to my exploits yet; he has taken away my sight, but he has not taken away the design of my mind. I shall be the head, Tortillard the feet, and you the hands, Chouette. You will help me, won't you?"

"Am I not with you to the rope or the gallows, Fourline? And when I got out of the hospital, and heard at the ogress's that you had sent for me, did I not run at once to Saint Maude, and tell those silly peasants that I was your wife?"

* Girl. † Priest. ‡ Reasoned. § Tongue.
‖ Accused of a capital crime. ¶ Killed a man in a quarrel.

These words of the one-eyed woman, excited unpleasant reminiscences within the Schoolmaster's mind. Changing suddenly his tone, he exclaimed, with an enraged voice:

"Yes: and the next day after your arrival, you stole all the money which that demon in the alley of Veuves gave me. Yes: you robbed my belt, which was filled with gold, while I was asleep; and that's the reason why I am at your mercy now; and every time I think of it, I don't know what prevents me from murdering you on the spot, you old thievish, one-eyed hag." And he advanced a step toward Chonette.

"Take care how you hurt Chouette," exclaimed Tortillard.

"I will snap off the heads of both her and you, viper and spawn of a viper!" exclaimed the sightless brigand, in rage; and guiding himself by the voice of Bras-rouge's son, he aimed at him a random blow, that would have cut short the career of that promising youth, if it had only hit him.

Tortillard picked up a large-sized stone, and slung it in the face of the Schoolmaster. The brigand rose, furious with pain and rage, and roared like a bull, as he walked a few steps stumblingly forward.

"Look out for yourself, look out!" cried Chouette, until the tears ran from her eye; "you will fall into the ditch." In spite of the ties of crime and blood, which united her to the monster, she saw, with ferocious joy, the annihilation of his tremendous and fearful strength. She probably justified herself for this dereliction of conjugal regard, by that maxim of Rochefoucault, "that we always find something pleasing in the misfortunes of our best friends." The hideous urchin participated in Chouette's hilarity, at the uncertain gait of the Schoolmaster, and he exclaimed:

"Open your eyes, my old fellow: open your eyes! You don't walk straight, you stagger; you festoon: you can't see clear. Why don't you wipe your spectacles a little? they must be dirty."

Goaded to madness by the utter impossibility of catching his tormentor, the herculean brigand roared like an enraged tiger in chains.

"You seem to have a cough, old fellow," sung out the son of Bras-rouge. "I have some famous liquorice in my pocket, which a gendarme gave me; but that won't injure it." And he picked up a handful of fine sand, which he flung into the assassin's face. Struck in the eyes by this new torture, the hardened murderer turned pale under his livid scars, raised his arms in a supplicating attitude, and lifting his hideous face to Heaven, exclaimed in an accent of inexpressible despair, "Good God!" This appeal to divine mercy—coming as it did from a monster, stained with every crime; before whose irresistible might the fiercest and most powerful men had trembled—seemed like the wail of a fiend, dashed by Omnipotence into the abyss of wo!

"Ha, ha, ha!" shouted Chouette; "your tongue slips as well as your feet, my good man. It is not God, but the *baker*, that you wished to call upon."

"If I only had a knife, I would kill myself," said the wretch, biting his fists in impotent fury.

"A knife? you have got one in your pocket, Fourline; and a sharp one too, as the little old man in the rue de Roule, and the drover, have by this time informed the moles."

The Schoolmaster, thus set at defiance, continued in a changed tone: "Chourineur was good; he did not rob me; he took pity on me."

"Why did you tell me that I had stolen your gold?" said Chouette, still laughing.

"You only entered my room," said the brigand; "I was robbed the night you came. Whom could I suspect? the peasants were honest people."

"Why shouldn't peasants steal, as well as other people? is it because they drink milk, and gather grass for their rabbits?"

"I was robbed by somebody."

"Is that Chouette's fault? Now think of it: if I had grabbed your belt, do you think I should have remained with you after it? Sure, I would have taken your money if I could; but on the word of an honest woman, you would not have seen me again until the money was gone. Come, come, old Fourline; you please me, although you are blind. Be gentle, and don't break your teeth by gnashing them together."

"One would believe that he was cracking walnuts," said Tortillard.

"Ha, ha, ha! the urchin is right," shouted Chouette with merriment. "Be calm, my old man, and let him enjoy his sport; it is natural at his age. But confess, that you are unjust toward me. When that tall man in black, that looks like an undertaker, told me that he would give me a thousand francs for carrying away a little girl from the farm of Bouqueval, and bringing her to a certain place on the plain of Saint Denis, which he would point out; did I not propose it to you at once, instead of taking a man with me that had his peepers open? Is not that an act of charity to you? for except by holding the little girl, while Tortillard and myself strap her up, you can be of no service to us. You are a sort of fifth wheel to an omnibus, at any rate; and although I would have robbed you if I could, I still wish to take good care of you. I want you should owe everything to your beloved Chouette; that's my way. We will give two hundred bullets (francs) to Barbillon, for driving the carriage, and for coming here once before, with a servant of the tall man, to spy about the place; and we shall then have eight hundred bullets left to enjoy ourselves with. What do you say to this? can you still be angry with your old woman?"

"Who knows whether you will give me anything, when the job is done?" said the brigand, mistrustingly.

"It is true, that I will give you nothing at all; for you are in my frying-pan, good Fourline, as Pegriotte was formerly, and I shall cook you just as I please, until the *baker* puts you into his oven. Ha, ha, ha! can you have a grudge against Chouette now?" said she, patting the brigand affectionately on the shoulder.

"You are right," said the Schoolmaster, with a groan of grief; "it is my fate now to be at the mercy of a woman and a child, whom I once could have killed with a breath. I wish I was not so afraid of death," continued he, falling back upon the side of the ditch.

"You have become a coward—a perfect coward," said Chouette, with contempt. "You had better now begin to talk of your conscience: if you do, I shall leave you in the lurch."

"And I cannot revenge myself upon the man who, by torturing me so, has placed me in this weak condition, and from which I never can escape," said the Schoolmaster, with returning rage. "Afraid as I am of death, if any one should tell me, 'I will give that man into your arms, on condition that you shall both be thrown into an abyss,' I would say, 'let us be thrown.' Yes; I would not let him escape; I would clasp him to my breast: before reaching the bottom together, or while rolling about with him, I would fasten my teeth in his throat; I would gnaw out his heart; for I would not let a knife have anything to do with my work of vengeance."

"Now, Fourline, you show proper pluck: those are sentiments which I approve. We shall meet with that Rodolphe again, and Chourineur also. After leaving the hospital, I wandered about the house in the alley of Veuves; but it was all shut up. I asked the tall man in black if we couldn't lay a trap for that Rodolphe, after we got through with the present job; and he said, 'perhaps:' do you hear, Fourline? he said 'perhaps.' Oh! we shall have a piece of him to eat yet, and I will cook it my own way."

"And you will not abandon me, will you, Chouette?" said the brigand, submissively; "for if you should, what would become of your poor Fourline?"

"That is very true: what a good joke it would be, if I and Tortillard should go away in the carriage, and leave you here alone. The cold will bite hard. 'T would be amazing funny—hey, Fourline?"

At this threat, the Schoolmaster arose, trembling. "No," said he, "you would not do that, Chouette, nor you, Tortillard? It would be too hard-hearted and cruel toward a harmless old blind man."

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the fiendish old hag; "too cruel to a harmless blind man! And did the old gentleman in the rue de Roule, and the drover, and the woman at the canal Saint Martin, and the porter of the alley of Veuves, find the caresses of your big dirk harmless? You have made others suffer, why should you not take your turn?"

"Well, I confess I was wrong to suspect you," said the Schoolmaster, humbly; "and I beg your pardon, and Tortillard's also: yes, I beg the pardon of both of you."

"As for me," said Tortillard, "I wish you to get down on your knees, and beg pardon for wishing to beat Chouette."

"Love of a monkey! how funny he is! and yet I have a mind to see how you would look. Come, down on your knees, as if you were making love to Chouette: be quick, or we shall leave you, and night is coming on."

"Night or day is all the same to him: he always keeps his blinds down, for fear of injuring his complexion," said the facetious imp.

"Here I am on my knees. I ask your pardon, Chouette, and yours too, Tortillard: are you satisfied?" said the brigand, kneeling down: "you won't abandon me now?"

A sight more revolting can scarcely be imagined, than this hideous group, in the dusky light of the winter evening, at the bottom of that ravine.

The Schoolmaster was kneeling in supplication, with his muscular arms stretched forth, his hard and thick hair falling back like a mane, his lips livid with fear, and the distended lids of his eyes displayed their glassy and corpse-like pupils—a vanquished Titan, prostrate before a woman and a child!

The one-eyed hag, wrapped in a red shawl, with a mass of tangled gray hair escaping from under an old black cap, stood over him, with an eye sparkling like a burning coal, a face lit up with an expression of ferocious joy, three long and yellow teeth protruding from her exposed jaw—a grinning and vindictive Fury!

Clad in a ragged blouse, standing on his longest leg, his yellow face and broad mouth expanded with a sardonic grin; the deformed boy, leaning on Chouette to maintain his equilibrium, seemed like her accompanying imp ministering at some diabolical rite.

"But promise not to abandon me," said the Schoolmaster, frightened at the prolonged silence of his companions, who were enjoying his fear. "Are you no longer here?" added the murderer, bending over to listen, and extending his arms.

"Yes, yes, my man; we are here. Do not fear; I will not abandon you; I would rather kill you at once: but I must comfort you, by telling you why I will not abandon you. Listen to me attentively. I always delighted to have some one upon whom I could exercise my nails, either mankind or brutes. Before I had Pegriotte—may the devil send her back that I may wash her face with vitriol!—before I had her, I had a little urchin, who died from trouble, and that was the reason why I was sent to prison for six years. During the time I was there, I tortured birds; I tamed them in order to pluck them alive: but that sport didn't pay well—the birds wouldn't live long enough. After I left the prison, Goualeuse fell into my grip; but the little beggar ran away, while there was yet plenty of fur for me to pull from her skin. Afterward I had a dog which suffered as much as she did, for I cut off one of his fore legs, and one of his hind one's, which gave him such an awkward gait, that I thought I should die with laughing."

"I will do that to a dog I know, which bit me once," said Tortillard to himself.

"Well: when I met you, my good man, I was about training a cat," continued Chouette; "but now, *you* will be my dog, my cat, my birds, my Pegriotte, my beast of suffering. Do you understand, my man? Instead of having a bird, or a child to torment, I shall have a wolf, or a tiger: that is what I call first-rate."

"Old Fury!" exclaimed the Schoolmaster, giving way to his rage.

"Do you still cherish a grudge against your old woman? Well, leave her; you can do it. Come, play the part of a traitor."

"Yes, the door is open; go ahead! old white eyes," said Tortillard, with a burst of merriment.

"Would that I could die! would that I could die!" exclaimed the Schoolmaster, wringing his hands.

"You are repeating now, my man," replied Chouette, "what you have frequently said before. Die! Nonsense; you cannot die. You are as solid as the Pont Neuf. Come; do consent to live, for the happiness of your Chouette. I will torture you now and then just for my enjoyment, and in that way you will earn the bread which I give you, and besides, you will aid me in some good jobs: in short, you will be my dog. When I say to you 'fetch,' you will fetch; when I say to you 'carry,' you will carry; when I say to you 'bite,' you will bite. But look here, my man, I do not wish to take you by force; I want to have you free to choose. If, instead of the life I propose, you would prefer to live on your income, to ride in your carriage, to sit by the side of a pretty woman, to wear the cross of the Legion of Honor, to be doctorated and called 'great judge,' to see clear instead of being blind, don't be modest; it will be easy for you to do all that. We will serve it to you, quite hot. Won't we, Tortillard?"

"Yes, boiling," replied the son of Bras-rouge, with great promptness, and with sharp laughter. "But hark!" said he, suddenly, bending his ear to the earth. "I hear some steps on the path. It cannot be the little girl, because they are coming the same way she came from."

And, in fact, a robust country-woman of middle age, attended by a large farm-dog, bearing on her head a covered basket, crossed the ravine, and followed the path which Goualeuse and the curate had taken. We will now join those two personages, leaving the estimable trio still in ambuscade.

CHAPTER IV..... THE PARSONAGE.

THE last light of day was slowly fading behind the imposing mass of the Chateau of Ecouen; a vast plain spread for an immense distance, with its brown furrows hardened by the frost; an unbroken solitude, of which the small village of Bouqueval seemed the oasis. A sky, which at the zenith was of most perfect serenity, was in the west brilliant with long purple clouds, a sure indication of a cold night. The moon at its earliest quarter, displayed its silver crescent, in the immensity of space. The repose of nature was unbroken by a solitary sound; and the hour was sacred to contemplation. The curate paused for a moment upon the summit of the hill, to enjoy the beautiful winter landscape.

After a short pause, stretching his trembling hands toward the expanse of azure above, he said to Fleur de Marie, who was walking pensively by his side:

"Look, my child, into this immense vault above, the limit of which no human eye can reach; observe also, the unbroken stillness of this twilight hour. It seems to me that the silent and the infinite, are fitting emblems of the Eternal. I say this to you, Marie, because you are very alive to the beauties of creation; and as I have been affected by it with religious inspiration, I was desirous of learning what effect it would produce upon you, who have been so long disinherited from the beauties of nature. Are you not struck, like myself, with the imposing calm which reigns over this hour?"

Goualeuse made no reply. The curate, struck by her silence, looked toward her: she was weeping.

"What affects you, my child?" said he, kindly.

"My father, I am very unhappy."

"Unhappy! you? At this moment, my child?"

"I have no right to complain of my fate, after all that has been done for me, and yet——"

"And yet?"

"Oh, father, forgive me! perhaps my grief offends my benefactor?"

"Hear me, my child. We have often solicited from you an explanation of the cause of the sorrow which oppresses you, and which gives Madam George so much anxiety; but you have never answered us with candor, and we respected your secret, while regretting that we could not relieve your troubles."

"Alas! father, I am incapable of explaining what passes within me. The silence and beauty of the evening fell like soft music upon my spirit, and heart-broken, I wept."

"But what has caused this unrelieved melancholy? You cannot doubt the sincerity of our affection, the tenderness of our interest, in everything that appertains to you? Besides, I must tell you that the day approaches, when you will be admitted to the holy rite of baptism. Madam George and Mr. Rodolphe as sponsers, will present you at the font, and there bind themselves by the most sacred engagements, to watch over for ever the welfare of your body and soul."

"Will Mr. Rodolphe, he who first lifted me from the depths of my wo, will he," said Fleur de Marie, clasping her hands, "deign to grant to a poor, unfortunate and forsaken girl, that new proof of his confidence and regard? I will conceal nothing from you, father: I fear it would convict me of ingratitude."

"Ingratitude! In what manner, my child?"

"In order to be understood, I must advert to the early days of my residence on the farm."

"I listen to you: we will converse as we walk along."

"I pray you, father, to hear me with all that indulgence which you have always extended to me; for what I now confess may appear exceedingly wicked."

"The Lord has given you bountiful proofs of his mercy: come, take courage."

"When it was first told me," commenced Marie after a moment's thought, "that I would be permitted to live upon the farm, in the society of Madam George, it seemed to me that I was rapt in a delightful dream, from which I should speedily awake: it seemed like a revery that was too pleasant to last. Every instant my thoughts dwelt upon Mr. Rodolphe. Often, when alone, I involuntarily raised my eyes to heaven, that I might see and bless him. I fear I thought more of him than of God, for he had done for me what in my misery I sometimes hoped that God would do. I was happy; happy as one who has escaped from a great danger. You and Madam George were so exceedingly kind as almost to restore me to self-respect. I began to think that I was more to be pitied than blamed."

The curate looked at Fleur de Marie with excited interest as she proceeded.

"By degrees, I became accustomed to my new mode of life;

I no longer feared upon waking up in the morning, to find myself in the den of the ogress. I went to sleep with serenity, and it was sufficient happiness for me to aid Madam George in her daily labors, to improve myself in the lessons which you gave me, and to apply your religious instructions; and, with the exception of an occasional pang of shame when my thoughts turned to the past, I thought myself equal to any person, when, on a certain day——"

Fleur de Marie's recital was here interrupted by her sobs.

"Calm yourself, my child; take courage, and continue your confession."

Goualeuse, wiping the tears from her eyes, proceeded: "You remember, father, that about All-saints' day, Madam Dubreuil, fermière of the Duke de Lucenay, at Armouville, came to spend some time here with her daughter?"

"I do; and I saw you with pleasure form the acquaintance of Mademoiselle Clara Dubreuil, who possesses rare qualities."

"She is an angel, father—an angel. When I first heard that she was coming to spend some time at the farm, my happiness was complete: I thought only of the moment when I should meet with such a delightful companion. At last the time arrived. I was in my room, which I was to share with her; I adorned it in the best manner I could—all for her. I was informed that Clara had arrived, and I entered the parlor with a beating heart. Madam George, in introducing the young girl—who had such a sweet and modest look—said to me, 'Marie, here is a friend for you;' and Madam Dubreuil added, 'I hope you and my daughter will be sisters to each other.' Hardly had her mother uttered these words, when Clara came forward and kissed me. Then, father," said Fleur de Marie, weeping, "I can hardly express what passed within me; but when I felt the pure moist lips of Clara upon my blemished cheek, burning with shame and remorse, I remembered what I was. Was it for me—for *me*, to receive the pure caresses of those lips? Oh! my father, it seemed to me like deceit and base hypocrisy!"

"But, my child!"

"Oh! my father," said Fleur de Marie, interrupting the curate by the excitement of her emotions, "when Mr. Rodolphe took me from the Cité, I had a vague consciousness of my degradation; but do you believe me, that the education, the advice and the example which I have received from you and Madam George, while enlightening my mind, has, alas! made me understand that I was more culpable than unfortunate! Before the arrival of Mademoiselle Clara, when these thoughts tormented me, I tried to forget them in endeavors to please Madam George and yourself, father. If I blushed for the past, it was only in my own eyes; but the sight of that young girl, of the same age with myself, so charming and so virtuous, has brought most painfully to my mind the distance between her and myself. For the first time, I felt that there was a shame so deep, that nothing could wash it away. From that day to this the despairing thought has haunted me: in spite of myself it will visit me—not even for a moment does it allow me repose."

Goualeuse wiped her eyes, which were filled with tears, and the curate said to her:

"Do reflect, my dear child, that if Madam George wished to see you the friend of Clara Dubreuil, it was because she esteemed you in every way worthy of her friendship; and the reproaches with which you address yourself might be, with as much propriety, addressed to one who has in every respect showed herself your mother."

"I know it, father; I was wrong undoubtedly, but I could not overcome my shame and my fear; and this is not all: I need courage to proceed."

"Go on, Marie; thus far your scruples, or your remorse, are all in favor of the purity of your heart."

"When Clara was once established at the farm, I was as sad as I expected to be happy; she, on the contrary, was filled with joy. She had a bed made in my room. The first night, before retiring, she kissed me, and told me that she loved me already—that she felt a great tenderness for me. She begged me to call her Clara, and asked if she might not call me Marie. Afterward she prayed to God, and said she would mention my name in her prayers, and asked me to mention hers in mine. I dared not refuse; and after a moment's conversation, she sank into a peaceful slumber. As for me, I had not yet gone to bed. I went near her; I looked, with tears in my eyes upon her angel-like face; then, thinking that she was sleeping in the same room with me—me, who had been found at the ogress's, with thieves and assassins, I trembled with shame, and felt myself unworthy to be near such purity. I went to bed, and was visited with awful dreams. I saw the horrible face of her who had tortured my childhood; I saw the Schoolmaster and Chourineur. Never have I passed such a night of misery!" and Fleur de Marie shuddered at the recollection.

"Poor Marie!" said the curate with emotion, "why have you not imparted this sad confidence to me before? I could have comforted you. But proceed."

"I went to sleep very late: I was awoke by Clara's kissing me. In order to conquer what she called my coldness, and to prove to me the sincerity of her friendship, she wished to confide to me a secret; she was to wed when she reached her eighteenth year, with the son of a farmer of Goussainville, whom she said she tenderly loved; the marriage had been for some time agreed upon between the two families. Then she related to me in a few words her past life—simple, calm, and happy. She had never left her mother: she never would leave her; for her future husband was to join Madam Dubreuil in taking charge of the farm. 'Now you know me, Marie, as if you were my sister,' she said; 'pray tell me your history.' At these words I thought I should sink with shame. I blushed, I stammered; I knew not what Madam George had said about me, and I feared to contradict her story. I replied vaguely, that being an orphan and brought up by very cruel people, I had enjoyed but little happiness during my childhood, and that my life of pleasure commenced the day I came to live with Madam George. Then Clara asked me, more through interest than curiosity, where I had been brought up—whether it was in the city or the country; what was my father's name. She particularly asked me, if I recollected ever having seen my mother. Each one of these questions pained and embarrassed me, I was obliged to respond to them in falsehoods; and you have told me, father, that it is wicked to lie. But Clara did not imagine that I could deceive her. She attributed the hesitation of my answer to the pain which the recollection of my childhood gave me. Clara believed, and pitied me with so much confidence and kindness, that I was touched to the heart. Oh! father, you cannot imagine how much I suffered during this first conversation: how painful it was to have nothing but hypocrisy and falsehoods come from my lips!"

"Poor girl! the wrath of God will visit those who threw you into this path of perdition, and who have entailed upon you for life the inexorable consequences of a first fault."

"Oh! yes, father: they were very wicked—the stain is ineffaceable!" said Fleur de Marie, weeping. "As Clara continued to speak to me of her marriage, and the happiness which she anticipated from domestic life, I could not avoid contrasting my own fate with hers; for in spite of all the kindness shown to me, what a miserable life of mortification is before me! You and Madam George, in showing to me the beauty of virtue, have revealed to me, in all its turpitude, the infamy of my past life. Nothing can ever rescue me from the disgrace of having been thrown an outcast among the vilest of mankind. Alas! since the knowledge of good and evil was to be so fatal to my peace, why was not I left to endure my miserable fate in all the bliss of ignorance?"

"Marie! Marie!"

"What I now say is very wicked: is it not, my father? Alas! this is what I did not dare confess to you. At times, so ungrateful am I, for all the goodness showered upon me. If I had not been rescued from infamy, misery and cruelty would have soon laid me in a peaceful grave; I should have died in ignorance of that purity, which always regretting, I never can attain."

"Alas! Marie, your error has been a fatal one! However nobly endowed by the Creator a creature may be, that stain once imprinted on the soul, leaves a stigma on the character for ever: such is the immutability of divine justice."

"What then is before me, father, but despair?" said Fleur de Marie, sobbing with hopeless grief.

"You must despair, Marie, of ever effacing from your history, this mortifying page," said the priest, in a mournful tone; "but you have grounds for the most exalted hope in the infinite mercy of the Almighty. There is nothing for you below save tears, remorse, expiation; but above," raising his hand toward the firmament where the stars were now appearing; "above, pardon, purity, eternal fruition."

"Mercy, mercy! Oh, my God! I was so young; and a life so long may yet await me, doom not my days to unceasing misery and shame!" said Fleur de Marie, in a tone of the most heart-rending and distressing entreaty, and involuntarily falling upon her knees at the feet of the curate.

Upon the top of the hill near which the parsonage rose, the aged Abbé stood; his venerable face, nervous with emotion, and his white locks stirred by the evening wind: one trembling hand was raised heavenward, the other abandoned to Fleur de Marie, who bedewed it with her tears. The cape of her cloak falling

back upon her shoulders, revealed the lovely features, and the tearful eyes of the supplicating Magdalen.

Down in that dark ravine, a convicted murderer, whose gigantic strength had been paralyzed by the arm of justice, now assailed by cowardly fears, is also kneeling at the feet of a demoniac woman and an imp of darkness. That woman, his accomplice and tormentor, stimulated to new crimes, while gloating with fiendish merriment over the terrible punishment which his past wickedness had inflicted—that woman, the cause of torturing with endless remorse, the angel-like spirit of Fleur de Marie. Strange coincidence! striking contrast!

Was not the exaggeration of this poor girl's grief easily conceivable? She was condemned to pass her youth in the midst of most abandoned and infamous beings—she left the terrible home of her infancy, for the walls of a prison—from prison she fell into a still deeper abyss—never having gone beyond the yard of the one, never passing out of the the cavern-like streets of the other—trained up to that day, in utter ignorance of the beautiful and the good—as much a stranger to elevated and religious sentiment, as she was to the magnificent splendors of nature; is it a matter of surprise that the dazzling dawn of virtue and purity, this rural eden, this affectionate and dove-like companion, all the powers of her mind stimulated at once, all her noble instincts called by one summons into the most vigorous life, the whole revelation of everything exalted in nature, and in spirit, bursting at once upon her amazed vision; should plunge her soul into unmitigated horror of the awful degradation of that abyss, from which she had just emerged! That with all the lively consciousness of this past existence upon her, she should feel that her touch was impurity; her presence contaminating; her cheeks a pollution to the lips of virtue; and friendship for her, upon whose soul an ineffaceable stain rested, was unworthy of a place in the bosom of innocence!

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"Oh, wo to me!" exclaimed Goualeuse, in despair; "should my future life be as pure and harmless as yours, my father, it can never redeem the past, it never can destroy the torturing pangs of memory. Alas, alas! nothing but shame and contumely are before me."

"On the contrary, there is happiness in store for you, my daughter, to whom the Lord sends this bitter, but salutary remorse: it proves the religious susceptibility of your soul. Others less nobly endowed, would, instead of repenting of the past, plunge into the enjoyments of the present, as into the river of oblivion. A delicate soul like your's, finds suffering, where a coarser one finds none; and these miseries here will be imputed to you hereafter, in mitigation of your offence. God abandoned you for a moment to the paths of evil, that your repentance might glorify his name, and the eternal rewards of the faithful be showered upon you. Has He not Himself said, 'those who are good, without conflict, and come to me with smiles on their lips, are truly my people; but those who, wounded in the struggle, come to me bleeding and suffering, are my chosen people.' Have courage then to persevere, my child; support, advice, encouragement, consolation—nothing shall be wanting to aid you. I am very old, but Madam George and Mr. Rodolphe are still young. Mr. Rodolphe especially, who watches over your welfare with such an enlightened solicitude. Say, Marie, say, can you regret that Providence placed you in his way?" Goualeuse was about to reply, when she was interrupted by the servant girl, who, following the same path with the curate and the young girl, had now overtaken them.

"Pardon me," said the girl to the priest; "Madam George directed me to bring this basket of fruit to the parsonage, and told me at the same time to accompany Mademoiselle Marie home, as it is growing late. I have brought Ture with me," continued the girl, caressing an enormous mastiff of the Pyrenees. "Although there are no bad people in the country, I thought it was prudent to bring him."

"You are right, Claudine. Here we are now at the parsonage. You will give my thanks to Madam George." Then, speaking in a low voice to Goualeuse, he said: "I have to-morrow to attend a meeting of the diocese; I shall return by five o'clock. If you desire it, my child, I will wait for you at home. I see by the state of your mind, that you need much instruction and advice."

"Thank you, father," replied Marie; "I will come to-morrow, since you permit it."

"But here we are at the garden gate," said the Abbe. "Leave the basket here, Claudine; my governess will take care of it. Return to the farm with Marie, for the night is approaching and the cold increasing. I will see you to-morrow, Marie, at five o'clock."

"To-morrow, father."

The Abbe entered the garden: Goualeuse and Claudine, followed by Ture, turned their steps in the direction of the farm-house.

CHAPTER V. ..... THE ENCOUNTER.

The night was dark and cold. Acting on the advice of the Schoolmaster, Chouette and the brigand had gone to a part of the ravine farther from the path to the parsonage, and nearer to the carriage, which Barbillon held in readiness. Tortillard was to watch for the return of Fleur de Marie, and inveigle her into the ambuscade, under the pretence of succoring an old woman in distress. The son of Bras-rouge had advanced a few steps, when his attentive ears perceived the voices of Goualeuse and the servant-woman. This unexpected attendant of the young girl defeated the preconcerted stratagem; and Tortillard hastened down the ravine to inform Chouette.

"There is some one with the goslin," said he in a low voice, and panting for breath.

"May the hangman break the little devil's neck!" exclaimed Chouette in a passion.

"Who is she with?" asked the Schoolmaster.

"It is probably the woman who passed up some time ago with the big dog: I heard a woman's voice," said Tortillard. "Don't you hear the noise of their sabots?"

The noise of their shoes was now distinctly heard upon the frosty ground.

"There are two of them. I can manage the little one with the mantle, but what shall be done with the other? Fourline is blind, and Tortillard is nothing but a weasel. The devil take the country wench! what shall we do with her?" repeated Chouette.

"I am not very strong," said Tortillard; "but I will throw myself at the feet of the woman with the dog, if you wish it, and hang on to her with my hands and teeth. I will not let go, depend upon it, until Chouette can carry away the minikin."

"And if they should scream out in the struggle, they would be heard in the farm-house," said the old hag; "and there will be a dozen men upon us before we can reach the carriage. It is not such an easy thing to carry away a screaming woman."

"Besides, they have a big dog with them," added Tortillard.

"Poh, poh! a dog is nothing: I could break his head with my sabot," said Chouette.

"They are coming nearer," said Tortillard, listening with his ear to the ground; "they are about going down into the ravine."

"But speak, Fourline; what do you advise? You big head, are you dumb, as well as blind?"

"Nothing can be done to-day," said the brigand.

"And the thousand francs of the gentleman in black—are we to lose those? No, indeed! Your knife, your knife, Fourline! I will kill the wench, and Tortillard and myself can gag the little one easily."

"But the man in black did not hire us to kill any one," said the Schoolmaster.

"Oh, we must charge him *extra* for the blood," said Chouette, "and he will have to pay, since we shed it as his agents."

"They are coming now," said Tortillard in a low voice.

"Open your knife, my man," whispered Chouette.

"Do not, do not!" said Tortillard, shuddering, and extending his hands to the old hag; "'tis too bad to kill."

"Your knife!" said Chouette in a low whisper, unheeding Tortillard's supplication, and taking off her shoes in haste. "I will creep softly behind them," said she; "I shall know the little one by the cloak, and I will soon *cool* the other."

"No," said the brigand, "'tis useless to attempt the job to-day; to-morrow will answer."

"You are afraid! you are a coward!" said Chouette, with ferocious contempt.

"I am not afraid," said the Schoolmaster; "but if you make the attempt to-night, you will surely fail, and put all our necks in jeopardy also."

"The dog, probably snuffing the presence of the desperadoes in the ravine, commenced barking furiously, and would not heed Claudine's repeated efforts to silence him.

"Do you hear? they are coming! Give me your knife, or else——" said Chouette, menacingly.

"Come and see if you can get it," replied the Schoolmaster.

"'Tis all over—'tis too late," said Chouette, listening to their footsteps; "they have passed. You shall pay for this, you old rascal!" continued the hag in a furious tone, and shaking her fist in his face. "One thousand francs lost by your fault, you old craven fool!"

"One thousand, two thousand, three thousand, perhaps, earned on the contrary," said the Schoolmaster in an authoritative tone. "Hear me, Chouette, and you will see that I was not wrong in

refusing you my knife. You and Barbillon can go back to the gentleman in black, and tell him that the business has fallen through to-day, but that to-morrow the goslin will be placed in his hands."

"And what will you do with yourself?" asked Chouette in a rage.

"Hear me. The little one goes every evening to accompany the wild boar home: it is by a mere accident that she has a companion with her this evening. To-morrow we shall have a better chance; to-morrow, therefore, you must come back about this hour, with Barbillon and the carriage."

"But you? what will you do?"

"Tortillard will lead me to the farm where the girl lives. He will say that we have lost our way, and that I am his father, a poor blind mechanic, and that we are going to Louvres to see one of our relations, who can give us some aid; and as we have become belated from mistaking the road, ask if the keeper of the farm will not let us sleep in some corner of the barn. Such things are never refused. The peasants will believe us, and give us a bed. Tortillard will examine well the windows and the doors. There is always some money to be made on these farms, particularly about rent-day. I have myself owned lands," said he bitterly, "and know all about it. We are now in the first part of the month of January, which is near quarter-day; and the farm, you say, is situated in a solitary place, and when we get acquainted with the premises, we can return here almost any day with our friends. At all events, it is a good project to chew upon."

"You always did have a big head, Fourline, and sorbonne most excellently," said Chouette, softening down.

"To-morrow morning, instead of leaving the farm, I can complain of some pains, which will prevent my going away; if they do not believe me, I will show them the wound that I got in the galleys when breaking my chain, from which I suffer yet. I will say that I burnt it with a red-hot iron in the course of my trade; they will believe me, and I will remain all the morning at the farm-house, so that Tortillard will have time to examine everything. When evening comes on and the goslin starts off with the wild boar, I can say that I feel better, and will pursue my journey. I and Tortillard will follow the little girl at a distance, and will wait in the ravine for her to return. Having seen us in the morning, she will not mistrust us, and will come near. Once within reach of my arm, I will answer for her safe-keeping and the thousand francs. Within two or three days, we can give the job at the farm-house to Barbillon or somebody else, and they will divide the eggs with us since we discovered the nest."

"You old eyeless one, you have n't your equal," said Chouette, embracing the Schoolmaster; "and if by chance she does n't lead the wild boar to-morrow?"

"We will commence again the day after to-morrow; it is one of those morsels which can be eaten slowly—besides, the delay will increase our expenses, which we must charge in the bill of the gentleman in black. Once at the farm, I can easily judge whether we can succeed in the way proposed: if not, we must try some other."

"Your plan is excellent, Fourline; when you can no longer walk about, you should set up as counsellor-general for thieves; you would make more money than any *prison rat*;* come, kiss your Chouette. We must make haste, for these peasants go to bed with the hens. I will run and find Barbillon; to-morrow we will be at the meeting of the roads with the rolling box, unless the rascal is arrested for having killed the husband of the milk-woman of Vieille Draperie. But if he can't come, somebody else will, since this counterfeit public hack belongs to the gentleman in black, who uses it whenever he wishes to go on any sly errand. Within a quarter of an hour after our arrival, I will be here waiting for you. By the way, I had almost forgotten to give some wax to Tortillard; there may be some curious key-holes upon the farm: here, do you know how to use it, Fifi?" said Chouette, giving a piece of wax to Tortillard.

"Yes, yes; be easy; father showed me how. I took for him an impression of a lock on a little iron box, which my quack master keeps in his back closet," said the son of Bras-rouge.

"Very well: in order that it may not stick, do not forget to wet the wax after warming it in your hand."

"You will see that I will do all you tell me, because you love me so much, don't you, Chouette?"

"I love you, Tortillard; I love you as if I were your mother, and the great Napoleon deceased was your father," said Chouette, embracing Tortillard, who was immoderately flattered by a suppositious father of such eminence. "'Till to-morrow, Fourline," added the hag, going toward the coach.

* Thus the thieves designate a member of the legal profession.

Tortillard and the Schoolmaster left the ravine, and turned their steps in the direction of the farm-house; the lights from which, shining through the trees, served them as a guide.

A strange fatality was now bringing together Anselme Durenel and his unfortunate wife, whom he had not seen since he was sentenced to the bagnio.

CHAPTER VI. ..... AN EVENING.

Is there anything more pleasant than the kitchen of a large farm, at supper time, on a winter's evening? Could a better picture be selected of the calm and comfortable delights of rural life? The aspect of the kitchen of the farm of Bouqueval at this hour, might have been transferred to the canvas as an ideal representation of the charms of agricultural life. The immense chimney, six feet high and eight broad, blazed like a furnace, with a pile of oak and beach-wood logs, distributing a comfortable warmth through the room, and eclipsing, by its glare, the light of a lamp which hung from the centre beam. Large copper kettles and milk-pans of high polish, were displayed on the shelves, and a huge tin water-pail shone by the side of a kneading-trough, from which was dispensed the agreeable odor of newly baked bread. A large heavy table, covered with a cloth of bleached whiteness, stood in the centre of the room, with the place of each guest designated by plates of brown and white ware, and a knife and fork scoured with scrupulous nicety. A large turrene of vegetable soup, smoked in the centre of the table, and sent out its appetizing flavor through the room; a large dish of bacon and cabbage, a no less formidable one of stewed mutton and potatoes, a roasted joint of veal, two large dishes of salad, a basket of apples, and a couple of large cheeses, completed the prodigal abundance of this hospitable board. Three large pitchers of frothy cider manufactured on the farm, loaves of brown bread as large as mill-stones, solicited the ravenous appetites of the laborers. A large black shepherds' dog, toothless with age, the patriarch of the canine family, owed to his advanced years and multiplied services, the privilege of reposing by the kitchen fire. Using the indulgence with commendable modesty, his nose placed upon his fore-paws, he followed with an eager eye and a watering mouth, the different culinary preliminaries of the entertainment. This venerable dog answered to the somewhat classical name of Lysander.

Perhaps, this will appear a rather sumptuous entertainment for an ordinary meal of domestics on a farm; but Madam George, faithful to Rodolphe's orders, attempted to render as comfortable as possible the condition of her laborers, selected from the most honest and industrious men in the country. They were paid generously, their situation was happy and enviable, and every laborer in the neighborhood was ambitious of being employed on the farm of Bouqueval—an innocent and praiseworthy emulation, as it was advantageous to the masters who employed them; for no one could secure a vacancy on Madam George's farm, without bringing with him the best testimonials. Rodolphe, in thus creating a model farm, not only contributed to the improvement of agriculture and the breed of cattle, but ministered to a higher philanthropy, meliorating the condition of the laboring classes, and offering premiums to honesty, activity and intelligence. After having completed all the preliminary arrangements for supper, the cook rang the bell which summoned the household to their meal. The joyful tocsin collected together laborers, farm-boys, dairy-maids, numbering in all fifteen or twenty, who gayly entered the kitchen. The men wore a manly open look, the women were plump and tidy, the young girls sprightly and cheerful; the countenances of all breathing forth good-humor, quietude and contentment. They were preparing innocently to indulge in the good things of the earth, by partaking of a repast which they had well earned by their labor.

The head of the table was occupied by an old laborer with white locks, with an open, frank, and loyal face, a quizzical expression of mouth; a perfect type of the sensible, upright, clear-headed peasant—a legitimate old Gaulois. Father Chatelain, (such was the Nestor's name,) who had been on the farm since his childhood, was now employed as head laborer, having been worthily recommended to Rodolphe, when he purchased the farm. Under the authority of Madam George, he was vested with a sort of supervisory power over the people employed upon the farm. He was looked up to with much respect by the subordinates, and treated with all the deference due to his age, knowledge, and experience. The guests all took their seats. After imploring the blessing, father Chatelain, following an ancient and pious custom, traced a cross with the point of his knife upon the loaf of bread, and then cut off a piece, representing the Virgin's portion—an alms to the poor—and afterward pouring

out a glass of wine in conformity to the same rite, placed the whole upon a plate, for which the centre of the table was religiously reserved. At this moment, the watch-dogs barked furiously: old Lysander gave a responding growl, and displayed two or three teeth of quite formidable pretensions.

"There is some one walking by the side of the yard-fence," said father Chatelain; and he had hardly uttered the words before the large gate-bell rang.

"Who can be coming so late?" said the old laborer. "Everybody belonging to the house is in. Go and see, Jean Rene."

A farm boy with this name, deserted his plate with evident reluctance; dropped a spoonful of soup upon which he had been blowing like a young Eolus, arose, and left the kitchen.

"This is the first time for a long period," said father Chatelain, "that Madam George and Mademoiselle Marie have not come down and seated themselves by the fire, while we were eating our supper. I am very hungry, but I shall eat with less appetite than if they were present."

"Madam George has gone with Mademoiselle Marie to her chamber; for our young lady was not very well when she returned with me from the parsonage," said Claudine, the robust maid who had attended Fleur de Marie.

"I hope the complaint of the good young lady is not anything serious," said the old laborer.

"No; I am thankful there is nothing serious; for if there was, Madam George would send to Paris for David, the negro physician, who attended her when she was unwell before. How strange it is that a black man should be a doctor. I should have no confidence in him, if I was sick. A white doctor is another sort of a thing."

"Did not Mr. David cure Mademoiselle Marie, when she was first sick?"

"Yes, father Chatelain."

"Well, then?"

"Oh, there is something about his being black, which I cannot stand, no how."

"Didn't he put again on her feet mother Anique, who, on account of sore legs, had n't been able to budge for three years?"

"Even so, father Chatelain."

"Well, my girl?"

"But then, a black physician is a black physician; and there is no getting over it."

"Hear me, my girl. What color is your heifer, Musette?"

"White, father Chatelain; white as a swan, and a good milch cow. I can say that of her, without making her blush, either."

"And what is the color of your heifer, Rosette?"

"Black as a crow, and a famous milch cow, too. I'll give every one their dues."

"And what is the color of that black heifer's milk?"

"White, of course, father Chatelain. Why do you ask such simple questions?"

"Is it not as white and good as Musette's milk?"

"To be sure, father Chatelain."

"What, though Rosette is black?"

"Certainly; pray tell what the color of a heifer has to do with her milk?"

"Nothing at all. And why, my girl, should n't a black physician be as good as a white one?"

"Well, it is only skin deep after all," said the robust girl; and if a black cow can give as good milk as a white one——"

These physiological reflections of Claudine, upon the difference between black and white cows, were interrupted by the return of Jean Rene, who was now blowing his fingers with as much zeal as he had previously blowed upon his soup.

"Oh! how cold it is!" said he. "How very cold to-night. It is a thousand times better to be by this fire, than out of doors in such weather."

"A cold that begins with an easterly wind, will be long and severe: you ought to know that, my boy," said father Chatelain. "But who was ringing the bell?"

"A poor blind man, with a boy that leads him," said Jean Rene.

CHAPTER VII. ..... HOSPITALITY.

"WHAT does the poor blind man want?" asked father Chatelain, of Jean Rene.

"He and his son have lost their way, while going to Louvres through the fields; and as it is horribly dark and cold, the blind man and his boy beg permission to pass the night here, in some corner of the barn."

"Madam George is too kind to refuse hospitality to a poor man; she will consent, I am sure, to give a bed to these people. But she must be informed of it. Go and tell her, Claudine."

Claudine disappeared.

"And where is the poor man waiting?" asked father Chatelain.

"In the small barn."

"Why did you send him to the barn?"

"If he had remained in the yard, the dogs would have eaten him up alive, and his boy also. Yes, father; I hallooed out, 'here Medor,' 'stop Ture,' 'down with you, Sultan;' it did no good. I never saw the dogs so furious. We do not teach them in this house to bite poor people, as they do at many places."

"Well, my boys, the steps of the poor have been turned here to-night for some purpose. Move a little one side; let us have two more plates for the blind man and his son, for surely Madam George will permit them to pass the night here."

"Just so," said Jean Reno; "but I am rather surprised that the dogs were so savage, particularly Ture, that went to the parsonage with Claudine; he acted as if he was possessed with a devil. While I was patting in order to appease him, I felt his hair stiff as bristles: he looked like a porcupine. What say you to that, father Chatelain; you who know everything?"

"I, who know everything, Jean, say that brutes know more than I do. Last fall, at the time of the storm, when the little river was running like a torrent, I was returning in the dark with my plough horses, mounted on the old roan; it was so black and thick that I could not find the ford: well, I let the bridle fall on the old roan's neck, and he himself found what none of us could find. Now, who taught him that?"

"Yes, father Chatelain, who taught that to the old roan?"

"He, who teaches the swallow to build her nest on the roof, and the snipe her nest in the rushes, my boy. Well, Claudine," said the oracle, to the girl who was entering the room, bearing in her arms clean sheets, which sent forth a perfume of sage and vervain; "Madam George has ordered you to give some supper and a bed to the blind man and his son, has she not?"

"I am carrying these sheets into the little room, at the end of the hall, for their bed," said Claudine.

"Go after them, Jean; and you Claudine, place two chairs by the fire, that they may warm themselves before coming to the table, for the cold bites to-night, I assure you." The loud barking of the dogs was again heard, and also the voice of Jean Rene, trying to quiet them.

The kitchen door was thrown open, and Tortillard and the Schoolmaster entered with precipitation, as if they were pursued.

"Take care of your dogs," exclaimed the Schoolmaster; "they are furious as tigers, and were very near tearing us to pieces."

"They have torn off a piece of my blouse," said Tortillard, pale with fear.

"Excuse us, my good man," said Jean Rene, closing the door. "I never knew our dogs act so before. It must be the cold that makes them so savage; and as these brutes have no sense, they think that if they can bite somebody, it will make them warm."

"You too, old one?" said the laborer to Lysander, as he was making menacing demonstrations against the new comers; "he has heard the other dogs bark, and he must show his few remaining teeth also. Lie down, you old savage." At these words of father Chatelain, accompanied with a significant kick, the old patriarch returned to his original position, but still growled at the intruders.

The Schoolmaster and Tortillard remained by the kitchen door, not presuming to advance.

Wrapped up in an old blue cloak, with a fur collar, and having his hat pulled down over the black cap that covered his forehead, the brigand held Tortillard by the hand, who was crowding close to him, surveying the peasants with mistrust; the honesty of whose faces completely bewildered the son of Bras-rouge.

Evil natures, like good, have attractive and repulsive affinities.

The features of the Schoolmaster were so hideous, that the inmates of the farm-house were inspired, some with fear, others with disgust; and the expression of their countenances did not escape Tortillard's notice. His mind, which had been at first somewhat daunted, was completely reassured, by the symptoms of loathing which the peasantry evinced; he was pleased with the fright which his companion inspired. Recovering from the effect of the first impression, father Chatelain, who thought of nothing but the duties of hospitality, said to the Schoolmaster:

"Approach and warm yourself, my good man, and after that come and take supper with us, for we had just seated ourselves at the table, as you came in; come, take a chair. But what am I thinking of? it is not to you, but your son that I should address myself, since you cannot see. Come, my child, lead your father to the fire."

"Yes, my good sir: may God reward your charity," said Tortillard, in a yawning, nasal and hypocritical voice. "Follow me, father: be careful;" and the boy guided the steps of the brigand.

They both approached the fireplace. At first, Lysander growled in a deep hollow tone; but having snuffed the Schoolmaster, he suddenly sent forth that sort of disconsolate howling, which makes the common people say, "the dog howls for death."

"Hell!" said the Schoolmaster to himself; "it must be blood that these cursed dogs smell; I had these same pantaloons on the night I murdered the drover."

"Well, that is singular," said Jean Rene; "old Lysander howls to death, in smelling of the old man."

A strange incident now took place: the howling of Lysander was so piercing, that the dogs in the yard (separated from the kitchen by a glass door only,) heard him, and as is habitual with the canine race, struck up the same melancholy howl. Although but slightly given to superstitious feeling, the peasantry looked at each other with terror-stricken countenances—the mysterious conduct of the dogs was certainly very surprising.

A man, whom the peasantry themselves could not look at without horror, entered the house; and the animals, usually peaceful, gave forth these sinister moans which, according to popular belief, foretold the approach of death.

The brigand himself, in spite of his hardihood—in spite of his infernal audacity, shuddered for a moment at hearing these funereal and death-like wails, which heralded the arrival of himself, a conscious assassin, at this house. Tortillard, skeptical and graceless, corrupted even at the breast, as Parisian ragamuffins usually are, was the only one who remained unmoved by the mysterious influence of this incident. Delivered from the fear of being bitten, the ugly little imp was totally indifferent to these unnatural lamentations, which terrified the inmates of the farm-house, and shook with fear the seared conscience of the Schoolmaster himself.

The first astonishment having passed away, Jean Rene went out, and the cracking of a whip was soon heard, which seemed effectually to dissipate the melancholy forebodings of Turc, Sultan and Medon. By degrees, the agitated faces of the laborers recovered their serenity; and the frightful ugliness of the Schoolmaster excited rather their compassion, than their horror. They pitied the little lame urchin for his infirmity, and found that he had an arch and cunning look, which was quite interesting; and they praised much his devotion to his father. The appetite of the laborers—for a moment forgotten—soon returned with redoubled strength; and for awhile, nothing was heard but the music of the knife and fork. While engaged with their meal, the peasantry remarked, with commendable sympathy, the care which the child took of his blind father, near whom he was placed. Tortillard prepared his morsels for him, cut his bread, and poured out his drink, with the most filial devotion.

This was the fair side of the medal: now for the reverse.

As much through cruelty, as through a monkey-like spirit of imitation, natural to his age, Tortillard found a cruel enjoyment in tormenting the Schoolmaster—following Chouette as his example, to whom he was devotedly attached.

How could this perverse child feel the need of being loved? Why did he enjoy the simulated affection of Chouette? How, in short, could he be moved by the dim recollection of his mother's caresses? It was one of those moral anomalies which protect the soul against absolute and unmitigated vice. Finding, as we have said, a great delight in having some harmless being for a beast of suffering—a muzzled tiger—Tortillard, seated at table, had now the opportunity of refining this pleasure, by making the Schoolmaster endure his torture without wincing. He compensated, therefore, for every act of attention to his pretended father, by a kick under the table, particularly addressed to an ancient sore, which the Schoolmaster had on that part of his leg, where the ring of the chain rested during his imprisonment in the bagnio. Each successive blow of the urchin, demanded from the Schoolmaster a stronger degree of stoicism to disguise the pain; and in order to afford himself additional amusement, the ingenious youth selected, as the best time for attack, the moment that the brigand was speaking or drinking. The impassibility of the Schoolmaster sustained his sufferings without any evidence of pain; for he knew, as also did the son of Bras-rouge, that it would be fatal to the result of his enterprise, to disclose in any manner what was going on under the table.

"Here, poor papa! here is a nut nicely fixed for you," said Tortillard, placing on the Schoolmaster's plate one from which the shell had been removed.

"Very good, my child," said father Chatelain; then addressing the brigand, added: "You are certainly much to be pitied, my good man; but such a dutiful and attentive son must afford you great consolation."

"Yes, yes, my misfortune is great; and without the tenderness of my dear child, I——"

The Schoolmaster was unable to restrain a sharp shrill cry. The son of Bras-rouge had at that moment hit the most susceptible part of his wound, and the pain was intolerable.

"What ails you? what ails you, dear papa?" said Tortillard in a dolorous voice, and throwing his arms round the Schoolmaster's neck.

The first monition of the Schoolmaster's rage, was to crush the imp in his herculean arms. As it was, he pressed him with such force against his breast, that Tortillard, with the breath almost squeezed out of his body, was compelled in his turn to give way to a deep moan. It was only the conviction upon the Schoolmaster's mind, that the urchin's aid was indispensable, which restrained his passions and saved the imp's life, who was suffered quietly to regain his chair.

In all this reciprocal torture, the peasants saw nothing but a display of filial and paternal tenderness; and they attributed the paleness and suffocation of Tortillard to the natural anxiety of a dutiful child.

"What is the matter with you, my good man?" said father Chatelain: "that cry of yours affected your son so deeply, that he can scarcely breathe."

"It is nothing," said the Schoolmaster, recovering his composure. "I was by trade a locksmith. Some time ago, while at work at the anvil on a red-hot iron bar, I dropped it on my leg, and burnt myself so severely that I have not yet recovered. I just now hit the wounded part against the table, and could not avoid crying out from pain."

"Poor papa!" said Tortillard, recovering his breath, and throwing a diabolical look at the Schoolmaster; "poor papa! it is indeed true, good people, that they never could cure his leg. I should be willing to have the wound upon my own leg, if I could only spare him."

The females regarded Tortillard with looks of great affection and interest.

"Well, my good man," said father Chatelain, "it is a great pity that you did not come to the farm three weeks ago, instead of to-night."

"Why so?"

"Because we had here a great doctor from Paris, who has a sovereign remedy for sore legs. A good old woman in the village, had not been able to walk for three years: the doctor applied some of his ointment to her wounds, and she is now able to walk as well as she ever did, and intends to go on foot one of these days to see the doctor in the alley of Veuves, Paris; and you know it is quite a distance from here there. But what ails you? have you touched your wound again?"

The alley of Veuves suggested such terrible recollections to the Schoolmaster, that his hideous features became distorted and convulsed.

"Yes," he replied, recovering his self-possession, "another severe pain."

"Be easy, good papa," said Tortillard; "I will bathe your leg carefully to-night."

"Dear little fellow!" said Claudine, "how he loves his father!"

"Indeed, it is a pity," said father Chatelain, addressing the Schoolmaster, "that the worthy physician is not here; for now I think of it, he is as charitable as he is learned; and when you return to Paris, let your little boy lead you to his house, and he will cure you, I am sure. His direction is not hard to remember: No. 17, alley of Veuves. If you forget the number, that will be no matter, for there are not many doctors in that street, particularly black doctors; for you must know that he is a negro, and that his name is David."

The face of the Schoolmaster was so covered with scars, that a change of color could not be easily discerned; but he turned pale, deadly pale, at hearing mention made of Rodolphe's house, and also of the negro doctor—the man who had inflicted upon him the terrible sentence, the consequences of which would follow him to the end of his life.

This day seemed to have been an unfortunate one for the Schoolmaster. In the course of it, he had been tortured by Chouette and the son of Bras-rouge; upon his arrival at the farm, the dogs, only restrained by their masters from devouring him, greet his homicidal presence by a howl of death; and the inhabitants of the mansion regale him with eulogies upon the man who had inflicted this awful calamity upon him. These circumstances, happening separately, would have produced but a slight impression on the brigand's mind; but crowded, as they all were, into a few moments of time, they inspired him with a superstitious terror which he had never experienced before. "It cannot be chance," said he, "which has exposed me to these frightful coincidences."

Father Chatelain, who had taken no notice of the Schoolmaster's paleness, proceeded: "At any rate, my good man, when you leave me, I will give to your son Mr. David's direction; for

it will delight him to relieve your sufferings, he is so good, so very good. It is a pity he is always so sad. Come, my man, let us drink to the health of your future restorer."

"Thank you; I am no longer thirsty," said the Schoolmaster.

"Oh! drink, do drink, dear papa! it will do your stomach good," said Tortillard, placing the glass in the brigand's hand.

"No, no; I do not wish to drink," said he.

"It is not cider that I poured out for you, but good old wine: there are but few burgesses that can drink such. I tell you, this is no ordinary farm. What do you think of our daily fare?"

"It is very good," said the Schoolmaster indifferently, completely absorbed in his reflections.

"It is just so every day. Hard work, a good supper, an easy conscience, and a soft bed, comprise the whole history of our life. There are seven of us here, but we do as much work as fourteen—but we are paid double the ordinary price: four hundred and fifty francs a month to the mere laborer; to the maids and servants, one hundred and eighty francs; and one-fifth of the produce of the farm is divided among us. Now, you may suppose that we don't let the ground remain idle long; for the more our old mother produces, the more we get."

"Your master can't grow rich very fast, if he pays you such wages."

"Our master is not like the rest of proprietors; he has a way of his own of getting rich."

"What do you mean?" asked the Schoolmaster, desirous of encouraging conversation in order to escape from the thoughts which tortured him; "is your master so very extraordinary?"

"Extraordinary in everything, my good man; and as chance has brought you to this village, so far distant from the highway, and as it is more than probable that you will never come back, I am unwilling that you should leave us without knowing what sort of a man our master is, and how he manages his farm. I will tell you all about it in two words, on condition that you repeat it to everybody you meet: you will find that it is as good a story to tell as to hear."

"I am listening to you," said the Schoolmaster.

CHAPTER VIII. ..... A MODEL FARM.

"You will not regret hearing what I am about to inform you," said the old peasant to the Schoolmaster. "My master said to himself one day, 'I am very rich—that is one good thing—but as riches won't give me an appetite for two dinners in a day, suppose I give one to those who now do not dine at all, and supply with more food honest people who have hardly enough to gratify their hunger.' No quicker said than done. Forthwith he purchases this farm, which at that time was not very valuable and only kept two ploughs in motion. I know all about it, for I was born here. Our master added more land to it: you will soon know the reason why. At the head of the farm he placed a worthy woman, as respectable as she was unfortunate—such are always his choice—and said to her, 'This house, like that of our Heavenly Father, shall be open to the good but barred against the wicked; the lazy beggar shall be expelled from it, but the alms of labor bestowed upon those who are willing to work; such kind of alms as does not humble him that receives, and at the same enriches those who bestow; and which, if the wealthy man does not give, he is no longer a good man.'

"Our master said these words, and upon my faith he was right; but he does more than talk, he acts, he performs. Formerly there was a direct road from this place to Ecouen, which shortened the distance by more than a league; but it had become so very bad, that it was impossible to pass over it without breaking the carriage and killing the horses. A few days' work, and a little money, furnished by the farmers of the country, would have restored the road to a comfortable condition; but the more that each one desired to see the road passable, the more each one refused to provide the silver and the labor. Our master seeing this, said, 'The road should be finished; but those whom it would profit the most to have it placed in a good condition, will not contribute the requisite aid; it is also almost entirely a road of luxury, and will eventually benefit those who have horses and carriages; but it shall first be of service to those who only have two hands and a disposition to labor. When, for example, a robust fellow knocks at this door and says, 'I am famishing, but can find no employment,' say to him, 'My boy, here is a dish of soup, a pickaxe and a shovel; go to the road of Ecouen, and every day that you place on it twelve feet of pebbles, you shall have at night forty sous; for every six feet, twenty sous, for every three feet, ten sous. If you will not work there at all, you shall have nothing.'" I went every evening as I returned from my work, to see how much they had accomplished."

"And only think," said Jean Renc, "there was a rascal found mean enough to eat the soup, and steal the pickaxe and the shovel. It is enough to disgust one with doing good."

"That is very true," said the laborers.

"Come, my boys," said father Chatelain, "what should we do, then? Should we neither plant nor sow because there are caterpillars, weevil and other vermin, which destroy the leaves and devour the grain? No, no; the vermin are crushed, and the good God—who is not stingy—makes new buds sprout, new ears of corn grow. The damage is all repaired, and it is not perceived that the vile insects have passed that way. Is it not so?" said the old peasant to the Schoolmaster.

"To be sure, to be sure," said the brigand, who had been for some time plunged in a profound meditation.

"As for females and children, there is work for them according to their strength," continued father Chatelain.

"And in spite of that the road does not progress," said Claudine.

"But for an infirm man like me, would they not grant the charity of some corner of the farm; a piece of bread and some nook for shelter, during the short time I have to live? Oh! if that could be done, my good people, I would spend my life in gratitude to your master."

The brigand spoke sincerely, but no repenting sorrow had yet touched his heart for the crimes he had committed. He was influenced only by feelings of envy, which the happy and quiet existence of the laborers excited, contrasted with the frightful futurity which Chouette held in reserve for him; and which filled him with deep regret that he had ever informed his accomplice of the place of his abode, and forsaken with her the honest people with whom Chourineur had placed him.

Father Chatelain, struck with the sudden exclamation of the blind man, looked at him with amazement: "I did not know, my good friend," said he, "that you were entirely without resources."

"Alas! yes. I lost my sight by an accident which happened to me in the prosecution of my trade. I am now going to Louvres to crave succor from a distant relation; but you know that people are sometimes so selfish and hard-hearted," said the Schoolmaster.

"Selfish or not," said father Chatelain, "a good honest mechanic like yourself, with such a gentle and affectionate child, would melt with compassion even the stones. But the master who employed you before the accident; why does he not aid you?"

"He is dead," said the Schoolmaster, after a moment's hesitation, "and he was my only protector."

"Why do you not go to the hospital for the blind?"

"I am not old enough to be admitted to it."

"Poor man! you are greatly to be pitied."

"Well, do you believe, if I do not find at Louvres the assistance which I need, your master, whom I already respect without knowing him, will have compassion on me?"

"Unhappily for you, the farm is not a hospital. We invariably grant to the infirm a night's lodging and a day's food, and also some alms; but God always provides for them of his infinite mercy."

"So, then, I must despair of interesting your master in my fate," said the brigand, with a sigh of regret.

"I tell you the regulations of the farm; but our master is so compassionate and generous, that he may do everything which you desire."

"Do you think so?" said the Schoolmaster: "do you think he would suffer me to find a corner here? I should be content with a pittance."

"I tell you, our master is capable of everything. If he consents to keep you on the farm, you will not be obliged to hide in a corner; you will of course be treated like the rest of us, in the same manner that you have fared to-day. We should find something for your son to do according to his strength; good advice would not be wanting to him; our venerable curate would instruct him with the other children of the village, and he would grow up wise and good. But as for that, you should speak to our Lady of Good Succor."

"How is that?" said the Schoolmaster.

"We have bestowed that name upon our mistress," said father Chatelain; "if she interests herself in you, you are safe. Our master never refuses a charity which our lady solicits."

"Oh! I will speak with her, I will speak with her!" exclaimed the Schoolmaster joyously; already anticipating a deliverance from the tyranny of Chouette.

This hope found no echo in Tortillard's bosom, who felt no disposition to follow the life which the peasant had pointed out, and grow up in virtue, under the auspices of the venerable cu-

rate. Rural life had but slight attractions for the urchin, and his mind was not very favorably disposed to study; and being still a faithful ally of Chouette, he viewed with great displeasure any attempt of the Schoolmaster to escape from their common despotism. He wished, therefore, to recall back to reality the imagination of the Schoolmaster, which was wandering amid the fields and woods and peaceful retirement of rustic life.

"Oh yes!" said the Schoolmaster; "I will speak to our Lady of Good Succor: she will pity me."

"Poor, good papa!" said Tortillard, "have you forgotten then, my good aunt, Madam Chouette, who will never abandon you, but would come here to aid you with our excellent cousin Mr. Barbillon?"

"This good man seems to have numerous relatives among the *fishes* and the *birds*,"* said Jean Rene in a low voice, and jogging with his elbow Claudine, who was seated next to him.

"You heartless fellow," said Claudine, returning the jog with a vengeance; "how can you laugh at these poor people?"

"Madam Chouette is one of your relations?" asked father Chatelain.

"Yes, she is one of our relations," replied the Schoolmaster, lugubriously.

He was fearful, that even if he should succeed in finding a refuge at the farm, Chouette would come and denounce him to the proprietor in order to gratify her malice. He was also fearful that the singular patronimics of the relatives that Tortillard had named, would excite suspicion in the minds of the peasantry; but his fears were groundless, no notice was taken of his aunt and cousin. Jean Rene alone, saw in it a good opportunity for the joke which he had whispered to the rebuking Claudine.

"Is Madam Chouette the relation whom you intend to visit at Louvres?" asked father Chatelain.

"Yes," said the brigand; "but I think my son is mistaken in trusting so much to her charitable disposition."

"Oh! my poor papa, I cannot be mistaken. Aunt Chouette is very kind; you know she is the one who sent you the wash with which I bathe your leg, and the directions how to use it; she is the one who said to me, 'treat your papa as I myself would treat him, and the good God will bless you.' My Aunt Chouette is warmly attached to you; she loves you so much that ——"

"Very well, very well," said the Schoolmaster, interrupting Tortillard; "that will not prevent me at any rate from speaking to-morrow morning with the good lady of this house, and soliciting her influence with the respectable proprietor of this farm: but," added he, changing the conversation in order to put an end to the impudence of Tortillard; "but speaking of this farm, some one has promised to tell me what there was peculiar in the management of it."

"I promised that," said father Chatelain; "and I am going to fulfill my promise. Our master, having organized a plan for distributing alms to labor, said to himself, 'There are plenty of establishments for the improvement of cattle, horses, ploughs, &c.; and by my faith, I think that it is about time that some plan should be contrived for the improving the breed of men: good cattle are excellent animals, but good men are better, but more difficult to raise. Plenty of oats, fine grass, pure water, constant care and good shelter, will rear superfine horses and cattle, but it is entirely another thing with men; we cannot increase the virtue of a man's heart, as we do the fat on a bullocks ribs, by feeding him. Grass fattens the ox because it is pleasant and agreeable to his taste; and in order to make good advice and good counsel agreeable to a man, it must be made profitable for him to follow it.'"

"In the same manner that an ox finds it to his benefit to eat good grass."

"Exactly so, my boy."

"But, father Chatelain, I have heard of a farm where young thieves, that had some good points left," said another laborer, "learned how to work, and were taken care of like so many little princes."

"That is true, my boy; it is humane and charitable never to despair of reforming the wicked, but the good also must be encouraged to hope. If an honest young man, healthy and laborious, having a disposition to learn, should present himself to that farm for reformed thieves, they would ask him, 'have you ever stolen anything, and been a little of a vagabond?' 'No.' 'Well then, there is no place for you here.'"

"What you say is very true, father Chatelain," replied Jean Rene; "they do for rogues what they would not do for honest people. They improve vermin, but not men."

"It was to apply a remedy to this, my boy, that our master, as I am telling this good man, established this farm. 'I know very well,' he said, 'that there are rewards *above* for honest people; but above is a great distance off, and some (we should pity those my boys,) have not strength and courage enough to get there. And then, what time have they to look toward heaven? During the day they delve the ground, and plant and hoe it for their master. In the night, worn out with labor, they immediately fall to sleep upon their poor bed. On Sundays, they go to the tavern, and forget in drunkenness the fatigues of yesterday, and those of to-morrow; and it is all because these fatigues afford no profit to themselves. After straining themselves to the utmost of their power, their bread is no less black, their couch no less hard, their children no less sickly, their wife no less feeble with nursing them; for, poor things, they have nothing to eat. Poor people might endure their fate without complaining, if they saw that everybody else was as miserable as they are; but when they go to the city, or to the village on market-days, they see white bread, thick and warm mattresses, children blooming like roses, and so plentifully supplied with food that they throw cakes to the dogs: and when they return to their comfortless huts, black bread and straw couches; when they see their little ones pale, thin, and suffering from hunger; they say to themselves, 'How we should have liked to bring home one of those cakes, which the little rich children threw to the dogs; if there are to be rich and poor folks in the world, why were we not born rich? it is not just. Why should not every one take his turn of misery and prosperity?' To be sure, my boys, what they say is very unreasonable, and does not make the yoke less heavy, for that yoke, hard and burdensome, must be incessantly worn; there is no prospect of relief before them; no hope of reposing from labor, and enjoying, even for one day, the comforts which ease and riches bring. Their whole life is one long rainy day without a glimpse of sunshine. It is for this reason, that they go to their work in sadness and disgust; for the greater part of hired laborers say to themselves, 'What good will it do me whether I work more or less, whether the crops are heavy or light? it is all the same to me; why should I kill myself with zeal! I will be strictly honest, because the dishonest are imprisoned. I will not be wicked, because the wicked are punished; but I will not be actively good, because goodness meets with no reward. I will cultivate merely the qualities of a good beast of burden; patience, strength, and docility.' Such thoughts are very unhealthy, my boys; for contempt for industry is not far removed from idleness, and idleness is the next door to vice. Those who are neither good men, nor yet bad, who are neither useful citizens, nor yet baneful rogues, are the largest class of mankind; and 'these are the men,' said my master, 'who must be improved, as much as if they had had the honor to be born horses, or sheep, or horned cattle. Let us contrive some plan by means of which they shall have an interest in being active, industrious, intelligent, and faithful to their obligations; let us prove to them that in becoming better, they will also become happier; that every one will gain by their improvement; and in order that good advice and moral precepts may be profitable, let us give them here below, as it were, a foretaste of that enjoyment which is reserved for them above.' After having formed his plan, our master did not divulge to the entire neighborhood, that he wanted six laborers, and as many maids for his farm; but he wished to select the best people in the country from the information which he could obtain from mayors, curates, and other people who were good authority. They were to be paid as we are, and that is like princes: to be fed better than burgesses, and to share among them one-fifth of the profits of the farm. They were to remain for two years on the farm, and then make way for others, selected in the same manner. After five years' absence, they were at liberty to present themselves for employment again, and would be received if there were any vacancies. Since the establishment of this farm, laborers in the vicinity say to themselves, 'Let us be active, honest, and laborious; let us excite attention by our good conduct, and some day we shall be able to secure a place on the farm of Bouqueval. We will live there as in a paradise for two years; we will perfect ourselves in our profession; we shall carry away with us some money, and everybody will be desirous of employing us, since to secure a place here, one must produce excellent certificates.'"

"I have already secured a place at the farm of Arnouville, under Madam Dubreuil's charge," said Jean Rene.

"And I am engaged at Gouesse," said another laborer.

"You see, my good man, that everybody gains by this arrangement," continued father Chatelain; "the farmers in the vicinity as well as the laborers. There are but twelve places on the farm to give, but there are perhaps fifty candidates farming other land, emulous of securing a situation here; and although all may not obtain them, they will still remain good candidates, will they not? And, as people say, the enterprising will always con-

* Chouette, means a screech-owl, and Barbillon a barbet, a kind of fish.

tinue good; for if they do not meet with success at the first struggle, they confidently expect it at the second. At any rate, it increases the number of valuable and industrious men; for out of a hundred horses or asses—excuse the comparison—which are raised for the purpose of securing the premium, but one obtains it; and yet the ninety-nine remain strong, swift, and first-rate animals. Now, my good man, when I told you that our farm was no ordinary farm, and our master no ordinary man, did n't I speak the truth?"

"Certainly," said the Schoolmaster; "his goodness and generosity seem to me unbounded, and I have so much the more reason to hope that he will pity my misfortunes. A man who does good with so much intelligence, and so lavishly, will not consider one act of charity, more or less."

"On the contrary, my good man, he does consider it; for every act of charity which he performs, diminishes his opportunities of affording himself delight. It is my opinion we shall meet on this farm again, and that will not be the last time that you sit by this table."

"Do you think so? well, I will hope in spite of everything," said the Schoolmaster. "You cannot conceive how happy and grateful I shall be."

"I doubt it not; because our master is such an excellent man."

"But let me at least know his name, as well as her's whom you call the Lady of Good Succor," said the Schoolmaster hastily, "that I may bless in advance their noble names."

"I conceive your impatience," said the laborer; "perhaps you are expecting some famous and high-sounding name? Not so. The names of our master and mistress are as gentle and simple as those of saints. Our good lady is called Madam George, and our master, Mr. Rodolphe."

"My wife, and my tormenting fiend!" muttered the Schoolmaster, thunderstruck with this new revelation.

CHAPTER IX. ..... THE NIGHT.

Rodolphe! Madam George!

The Schoolmaster could not believe himself deceived by any fortuitous resemblance of names. Before condemning him to his frightful punishment, Rodolphe had clearly intimated to him the interest which he felt for Madam George. In fact, the recent visit of the negro David was sufficient evidence that he could not be mistaken, in the identity of the master and mistress of this farm, with the wife, whose existence he had blighted, and with the judge, who had avenged his crimes. This last coincidence seemed almost miraculous, and fatal to his already excited mind; quenching, with one dash, the hope which was beginning to sparkle in his bosom, of obtaining relief from the proprietor of this farm, whose generosity had been so extolled. Instant flight was the first impulse of his mind. The name of Rodolphe inspired him with an invincible terror. Perhaps, at this very moment, he was actually in this house; and acting under the impulse of his stupor and his fears, he hastily arose, and taking Tortillard by the hand, said in a bewildered manner, "Let us go—lead me forth—let us leave this house!"

The laborers looked at each other, and at the Schoolmaster, with surprise.

"What! you go away at this hour? in such a night? You cannot think of it, my poor man. What flea has bitten you? are you crazy!" said father Chatelain.

Tortillard improved this apropos remark, heaved a deep sigh, made an affirmative sign, and bringing his forefinger to his forehead, intimated that the reason of his father was not perfectly to be relied on.

The old peasant answered him by a sign of intelligence and compassion.

"Come, come; let us go," said the Schoolmaster, endeavoring to drag away the child.

Tortillard, absolutely determined not to forsake a comfortable shelter for the open fields on such a night as this, replied in a dolorous voice:

"Oh! poor papa! your fit must be upon you again. Be calm, I pray you, and don't leave the house on such a cold night. I had rather incur the hazard of displeasing you than lead you forth into the cold fields at this hour." Then, turning to the peasants, he said, "You will aid me, will you not, good gentlemen, in attempting to prevent my good papa from departing!"

"Yes, yes, my child; be quiet," said father Chatelain; "we will not open the door; we cannot think of suffering your father to leave the house."

"You cannot oblige me to stay," said the Schoolmaster; "you told me that the farm was not a hospital, and I shall be in the way of your master, Mr Rodolphe."

"In the way of our master! Be easy about that, he does not live on the farm, and he does not visit as often as we should be happy to see him; but even if he were here, you would not disturb him at all. The farm is not a hospital, it is true; but I told you that the infirm, like yourself, would have a bed at night and food for a day."

"Your master is not here to-night?" asked the Schoolmaster, in a less frightened voice.

"No: he will be here within four or five days so you need have no fear of disturbing him; and it is not likely that our lady will come down to-night, or she would reassure you: did she not give orders to make you a bed? Besides, if you do not see her to-night, you can speak to her to-morrow before you leave, and you can request her to interest our master in your fate, and perhaps he will suffer you to remain upon the farm."

"No, no!" said the brigand, with terror; "I have changed my mind; my son is right, my relation at Louvres will have pity on me: I will go to her."

"As you like," said father Chatelain, complacently thinking that he was talking with one whose brain was cracked; "you can go to-morrow morning; but as for starting to-night with that poor little fellow, you must not think of it: we will prevent you."

Although he had assured himself of Rodolphe's absence from the farm, the terrors of the Schoolmaster were not entirely removed. Though frightfully disfigured, he still feared the recognizing glance of his wife; and he doubted not but she would denounce him, persuaded as he was, that in inflicting this punishment upon him, Rodolphe was ministering to the hatred or the vengeance of Madam George. But he could not leave the farm, as he was at the mercy of Tortillard; he therefore resigned himself to his fate. But in order to escape an interview with his wife, he said to the laborer:

"Since you assure me it will not disturb your master, or your lady, I will accept the hospitality which you offer me; but as I am very tired, if you will permit me I will go to bed, for I should like to start to-morrow morning by daylight."

"To-morrow morning, at any hour you please. We rise early here, and for fear that you may lose your way again, we will start you on the right road."

"I will go myself, and conduct the good man part of the way," said Jean Rene, "since Madam George told me to take the *carriole* to-morrow, and bring some bags of money from the notary, at Villiers le Bel.

"You may see the blind man on his way, if you please, but you will go on your own legs for Madam George changed her mind this afternoon. She reflected, with good reason, that it would not be worth while to keep so large a sum upon the farm in advance. It will be time enough on Monday to go to Villiers le Bel, and the money will be quite as safe at the notary's as here."

"Madam knows better than I do what she wishes to do; but what is there to endanger the money here, father Chatelain?"

"Nothing, my boy—God be praised: but for all that, I would rather keep five hundred bags of wheat, than ten bags of money. Well," continued he, addressing the brigand, "come with me, my good man; and you, my child, follow us." Then taking a light, and going before the guests, he led them into a small room on the first floor, which was approached through one on which several doors opened. The laborer placed the light upon the table, and said to the Schoolmaster:

"Here is your room, and may God give you a good night's rest, my good man: as for you, my child, you cannot but sleep sound at your age."

The brigand took his seat by the side of the bed, to which Tortillard had led him, holding him by the hand. The young cripple made a sign of intelligence to the laborer at the time he was leaving the room, and followed him into the hall.

"What will you have, my child!" asked father Chatelain.

"My good sir, I am much to be pitied. Sometimes my poor papa has a fit during the night; it is like a convulsion; I may not be able, all alone, to relieve him. If I were obliged to call for help, could I be heard from this room?"

"Poor little fellow!" said father Chatelain, "give yourself no uneasiness: do you see that door near the stairs?"

"Yes, my good sir, I see it."

"Well, one of our laborers sleeps there; you will only have to go and wake him. The key is in the lock; he will come and aid you in relieving your father."

"Alas! sir, perhaps both of us will not be able to hold my poor papa, if his convulsions should be violent. Could you not come yourself—you who look so kind, so very kind!"

"As for me, my child, I sleep with the other laborers, in a part of the building across the yard. But be easy, I pray of you;

Jene Rene is so vigorous that he could prostrate a bull, by taking him by the horns. Besides, if you need help, he will go after the cook, who sleeps up stairs, in the room next to that of our mistress and dear young lady; and in case of need, the good man can have the assistance of the nurse, who is always very attentive to the sick."

"Oh, thank you, thank you, my worthy sir! I will pray to God to bless you, for having so much compassion upon my poor blind father."

"Well, my child, good night; I hope you will not need the aid of any one to hold your father. Go in now, perhaps he is waiting for you."

"I will, sir. Good night."

"May God preserve you, my child." And the old laborer went away.

Hardly was his back turned, when the little cripple mocked him with the insulting gesture peculiar to Parisian blackguards, which consists in knocking on the back of the head with the palm of the left hand several times, and at each knock, protruding the right hand wide open toward the individual jeered at.

Imposing upon the benevolent feelings of the old peasant, the young imp, with fiendish craft, had succeeded in collecting a part of the information which might subserve the sinister projects of Chouette and the Schoolmaster. He had discovered that the building was inhabited only by Madam George, Fleur de Marie, the cook, and one laborer.

Tortillard, in entering the room assigned to the Schoolmaster and himself, was very careful to avoid a contact with the formidable companion he had so frequently provoked: the brigand, however, detected his presence in the room, and said to him:

"Where do you come from, you young imp of darkness?"

"You are very curious, old white eyes," was the response.

"You will have to pay now for all you have made me suffer during the evening, you son of perdition!" exclaimed the Schoolmaster, as he arose furious with passion, groping his way around the room, and guiding himself by feeling of the walls. "I will smother you, young viper!"

"You must feel very funny, good papa! to wish to play blindman's buff with your little darling son," said Tortillard, laughing, and avoiding, with perfect ease, the pursuit of the Schoolmaster.

Carried away for the moment, by a burst of anger, returning reason soon convinced the brigand, that the pursuit of his annoyer would only result in defeat. Compelled to endure his torments until he could revenge himself with safety, the brigand swallowed his unavailing wrath, and threw himself upon the bed blaspheming.

"Poor papa! have you a toothache, that makes you swear so? what would your friend, the curate say, if he heard you? He would subject you to the severest penance."

"Well, well!" said the brigand, in a deep and constrained voice, "laugh at me if you please; abuse my misery, you young coward: it is mighty generous to torment a blind man."

"Oh! hear him! generous! that is amazingly funny," said Tortillard, with a burst of laughter. "Did you put on your mittens when you beat people right and left, before you were blind?"

"But I have never injured you: and why do you torment me?"

"Because you insulted Chouette, in the first place—because, like an old sneak, you wished to skulk into some corner of this farm, and milk the cows, and pick grass for the rabbits: in the second——"

"Villain, that you are! if I had had the chance of remaining on the farm—may hell fall upon it now!—you would have almost prevented me by your insolence."

"You remain here! that is a good one. Who then would be Madam Chouette's beast of suffering? myself, I suppose! No, I thank you, I have enough at present."

"Shut up, you little imp."

"I'll give you another reason. I am like my Aunt Chouette; there is nothing more amusing, than to tease to death such a big fellow as you, who could kill me with a blow of your fist; it is much finer sport than if you were weak. I had a great deal of fun with you to-night: 'twas as good as a pit-place in la Gaité.* At each kick which I let fly at you in private, the blood rushed into your face, your white eyes had a red streak round them; if they had only had a blue streak in the centre, they would have been two genuine tri-color cockades, like those of the city-guard."

"Come, come, now: you do like to laugh, Tortillard," said the Schoolmaster, in a soothing tone; "well, well: it is natural at your age; you see that I do not get mad. But instead of laughing at me, it would be better for you to remember what Chouette said, whom you love so much: you should go round and examine everything; take impressions of the key-holes. Did you not hear them speak about a large sum of money which will be brought here on Monday? We will come back with our friends, and find excellent picking. Pooh! 'twas very foolish for me to wish to remain here; I should have been sick of them, these fools of peasants, in less than a week. Is it not so, my boy?"

'T would have wounded my feelings to have had you remain," said Tortillard, giggling.

"Yes, yes: there is something to pick up here; and if there was nothing, I would return with Chouette to this farm, for the purpose of revenging myself," said the brigand, with a voice of hatred and fury; "for I know that it is my wife who has excited this demon against me, who has placed me at everybody's mercy, by putting out my eyes. Well, since I cannot revenge myself upon him, I will upon my wife. Yes: she shall pay for it all, even if I set fire to the house and am buried in its ashes."

"You would like to have hold of your wife, wouldn't you, old fellow? And only think; she is not ten steps off—that's vexatious. If I had a mind, I could lead you to the door of her chamber, for I know where her room is. I know it—I know it—know it—it—it," said Tortillard, singing out the words as was his wont.

"Do you know where her room is?" asked the Schoolmaster, with ferocious joy. "You know it?"

"I see what is going to happen," said Tortillard. "I will make you stand on your hind legs, and beg like a dog for a bone: hear—beg for it, Azor."

"Do you know where the room of my wife is?" repeated the brigand, turning his head toward the side where he heard Tortillard's voice.

"Yes, I know it: and the best of it is, there is only one laborer who sleeps in this part of the building, and the key is in the lock, outside—crack—one turn and he is locked in. Come—sisteboy! stand up, old Azor."

"Who told you where the room is?" exclaimed the brigand, rising.

"Well, Azor: by the side of your wife's room sleeps the cook; another turn of the key, and we are masters of the house, your wife, and the young girl with the white cloak. Now give us your paw, old Azor—display your prettiest—sisteboy! whew!"

"You must lie, you little rascal. You don't know where it is."

"I am lame, but I'm no fool. But a moment since, I told that old booby of a peasant that you were in the habit of having convulsions at night, and I asked where I should go for help if you fell down in a fit. He told me I could wake up the laboring man and the cook, and he told me also where they slept—the first below, and the other above stairs, near your wife—your wife—wife—ife," said Tortillard, repeating his mocking and monotonous song.

After a few moments' silence, the Schoolmaster said to him, in a voice that was calm but frightful:

"Hear me! I have enough of life. This evening—I confess it—I had the glimmering of hope, which now renders my future much more frightful. The prison, the bagnio, the guillotine! are nothing, compared with what I have suffered since morning, and which I shall have to bear for ever. Lead me to my wife's room: I have my knife here—I will kill her. I shall be killed afterward; but no matter, I shall die avenged. What I now suffer is too much for me, before whom all have trembled. I tell you, boy, if you only knew what I have endured, you would pity me. It seems as if my veins would burst, and the flames of my burning brain would break through my skull."

"It 's only a cold in your head, old fellow. Sneeze away; 'twill act as a purge," said Tortillard, with a fresh burst of laughter. "By the way, won't you take a pinch of snuff?" said he, striking his left hand with his fingers, imitating the raps on the lid of a box, and humming,

"In my box I have plenty of snuff.
You shan't have any: you 've got enough."

"Oh, my God!" exclaimed the Schoolmaster, "they wish to drive me mad!" who was in fact almost deranged by the violence of his ungratified vengeance. His formidable powers were entirely impotent for all purposes of aggression. He was like a famished wolf, tortured by a child through the bars of his cage for an entire day, and smelling, not two steps from his nose, a victim that would at once satiate his hunger and his rage. The last sarcasm of Tortillard destroyed entirely the brigand's self-command. In the absence of any other victim, he seemed yearning to tear his own flesh, and fasten his herculean grip upon his own throat; and the blood, rushing to his head, affected him with all the symptoms of strangulation. He seemed determined to lay violent hands upon himself; and had a loaded pistol been in his possession, he would undoubtedly, in

* The name of one of the Parisian theatres.

the frenzy of his rage, have scattered his own brains upon the wall. He finally fumbled in his pocket, drew from it a large dirk-knife, opened it, and threatened to bury it in his heart: but instinct, reflection, terror, arrested the hand of the murderer.

Tortillard had watched all these movements with an excited attention; and when he observed the inoffensive denouement of this heart-rending tragedy, he exclaimed, with a mocking giggle:

"No go—flash in the pan—spunk failed him."

The Schoolmaster closed his ears against Tortillard's mockery of a cowardice shrinking from self-murder, in despair of escaping the sarcasms of the imp, which he feared would be fatal to reason. As a last resort, he addressed the cupidity of the urchin:

"Oh!" said he, in an almost suppliant tone, "do lead me to the door of my wife's room! You may yourself take all that you can find, and then you can make your escape, and leave me to bear the brunt. You can cry out murder, if you please, and let loose the bloodhounds on me. I shall be killed on the spot: so much the better: I shall die revenged, since I have not courage to destroy myself. Lead me—lead me there: heaps of gold and jewels will reward you. I repeat, that you may take everything for yourself alone: I only ask you to lead me to the door."

"Oh yes, I understand. I am to take you to her room, and then to her bed, and tell you where to strike, and direct your arm to the place; in short, you wish to make me the handle of your knife, old monster," replied Tortillard, with an expression of contempt, anger, and horror, which, for the first time during the day, had reduced to any serious expression the incessant grin and mockery which imparted such an imp-like expression to his face. "I had rather be thrown into the fire, be baked in an oven, or roasted to death, than to lead you to that door; you old, cowardly, drivelling dotard!"

"You refuse, then?"

The son of Bras-rouge drew near the Schoolmaster, his bare feet concealing the approach, and with wonderful agility caught from the brigand's hand the knife, which he still held, and darted to the extremity of the room in the twinkling of an eye.

"My knife! my knife!" exclaimed the Schoolmaster, stretching forth his hands.

"No!" said Tortillard. "As you intend to speak to your wife to-morrow morning, you can throw yourself upon her and murder her then; since you have had enough of life, and are afraid to kill yourself, as you say."

"He defends my wife against me!" exclaimed the bandit, whose reason began to waver; "he defends my wife against me! He must be the demon, or the demon's imp. Where am I? why does he defend her?"

"To tease you;" and his face resumed its malicious grin.

"Oh! is it so?" said the Schoolmaster, bewildered. "I will set fire to the house, and we shall all be burnt up together. I shall rather perish in the flames, than be roasted in this self-furnace. The candle! the candle!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" exclaimed Tortillard, laughing. "If your own lights were not extinguished for ever, you would discover that the candle had been out for this half-hour;" and Tortillard began singing,

"My candle is dead,
I have no fire."

The Schoolmaster uttered a deep groan, extended his arms, and fell headlong, with his face to the floor, in an apoplectic fit! He remained motionless.

"I understand you, old fellow; you are playing 'possum. 'Tis a trick of yours to get me within your reach; and then, what a dressing I should catch! When you have hugged the floor long enough, pick yourself up, old covey."

And the son of Bras-rouge, determined as he was not to sleep, lest he should be caught by the Schoolmaster, remained seated upon the chair, with his eyes fixed on the prostrate brigand; persuaded that this was merely a ruse to entice himself within the power of the assassin, and of course not understanding the dangerous character of his companion's complaint. In order to occupy himself agreeably, Tortillard drew from his pocket a red silk purse, and with eager, avaricious looks, counted over seventeen pieces of gold which it contained.

The reader will remember, that Rodolphe had given a purse to the Marchioness d'Harville, when she entered No. 17 rue du Temple, pursued by her husband, that she might have a pretext for visiting the Morels, in order to afford them pecuniary aid. The Marchioness was ascending the stairs rapidly, holding the purse in her hand, when Tortillard emerged from the office of the quack; and seeing the purse, he pretended to fall, and pitching against the Marchioness, snatched the purse, and scampered away. The Marchioness, hearing behind her the steps of her husband, was too terror-struck and embarrassed to complain of the daring robbery of the little cripple. After counting his gold, Tortillard, hearing no noise in the house, went with bare feet and attentive ear, concealing the light with his hand, to take the impression of the locks on the doors which opened into the passage, with the excuse prepared, in case of surprise, that he was going to summon assistance to his father. When he returned to the room, he found the Schoolmaster still prostrate on the floor; and, alarmed for a moment, he listened and heard the deep breathing of the brigand, and was convinced that he was still prosecuting his plan for entrapping him.

"At the same trick yet, old fellow?" said Tortillard to him.

The accident which had befallen the Schoolmaster, undoubtedly saved him from a fatal congestion of the brain, for his fall had caused a copious discharge of blood from the nose. He afterward subsided into a feverish comatose state, half sleep, half delirium, and was visited with a strange and frightful dream.

CHAPTER X..... THE DREAM.

The following vision assailed his distempered mind.

He was again in the presence of Rodolphe, in the alley of Veuves. The awful paraphernalia of the room where avenging justice had visited him, remained unchanged. Rodolphe was seated at the table on which were arrayed the connected evidence of a long life of turpitude: the saint-esprit which carried his mind back to the days of comparative innocence; the chain upon it, which reminded him that the holy relic had been desecrated by the infamous accomplice of his mature wickedness; the papers which he had taken from the victim he had robbed; and the crowbar, which demonstrated his burglarious attempt upon this house, where he was arrested in the full career of successful crime. At the left of his fear-inspiring judge, he beheld the stern and immovable countenance of the black executioner fixed upon him; at the right, he sees the agitated face of Chourineur. The vision of the brigand's remorse is not obscured, and he seems to see distinctly, through the blood with which the sockets of his eyes are filled: all objects upon which he gazes are dyed in its purple stain. As birds of prey float motionless in the blue expanse of ether, before pouncing upon their victims, a monstrous screech-owl, bearing on its feathered body the hideous face of the one-eyed hag, appeared to sail above the form of the conscience-stricken murderer, with its single green and glaring eye fastened upon him. The continued stare of the awful spectre weighs upon his breast and paralyzes his spirit. As when the organs become accustomed to darkness, we discern clearly those objects which were at first invisible; in the same manner in his vision the Schoolmaster perceives that an immense lake of blood divides him from the table where Rodolphe is seated. The inflexible judge and his attendants assume majestic and colossal proportions: the phantoms tower gradually to the ceiling, which swells above them as they ascend.

From the lake of gore, which seems like a shining mirror of red, the Schoolmaster sees his own mutilated features reflected; but soon his image is effaced by the bubbling of its purple waves, and from its agitated surface exhales a murky fog, with that violet hue which marks the lips of death. The gigantic figures of his three inquisitors loom forth as this ominous vapor disperses itself through the expanded room, and from its surface, the pallid faces and mangled forms of his victims pass before the murderer. He sees at first a diminutive old man, with a smooth and hairless head, counting rolls of gold in a miserable room, by the flickering light of an expiring taper; the pale moon shines through the miser's windows, and whitens the tops of the trees beyond, which tremble in the breeze; the Schoolmaster discerns his own hideous features peering through the glass, following with glaring vision the slightest motion of the aged man; he hears the rattle of the broken pane, and sees himself leap with one bound upon his victim and sheathe a long knife between his shoulders; the motion is so rapid, the blow so sudden, the wound so deadly, that the old man—a corpse—remains seated in his chair. The murderer attempts to wrench the knife from that lifeless form: he cannot do it. He redoubles his strength upon the immovable weapon, but in vain. He dare not abandon such damning proof of his guilt, and the hand of the assassin sticks to the knife, fastened in the body of the murdered man. The brigand hears the clang of spurs and the clash of sabres in the ante-room. To escape from certain death, he wishes to bear away the body of the diminutive old man, from which he cannot withdraw his weapon or his hand. In vain! the thin, feeble corpse of his victim weighs like a mass of lead! In spite of his immense shoulders, in spite of his desperate struggles, he cannot raise the unnatural burden. Nearer and nearer approach the avenging ministers of justice; the key turns in the lock, the

vision vanishes, and the spectral owl flaps her broad wings, and shrieks:

"IT IS THE RICH OLD MAN OF THE RUE ROULE, YOUR FIRST VICTIM: ASSASSIN! ASSASSIN! ASSASSIN!"

Darkened for a moment, the now transparent vapor reveals another phantom scene. Day breaks through the murky medium; a man dressed as a cattle-drover lies slain by the side of a highway; the trampled grass, the torn earth, all show that the victim had struggled desperately for his life. Five bleeding gashes are in his breast, and, though cold and motionless in death, his lips still whistled for his dog, and his lolling tongue cries, "Help! help! to me—to me!" Five whistles and five voices proceed from those ghastly wounds, the sides of which are moved like lips which speak.

At this moment the owl flaps her wings, responds to the sepulchral groans of the murdered man by five loud shouts of laughter, as wild and frenzied as the merriment of fiends, and yells, in a piercing tone:

"THE DROVER OF PAISSY! ASSASSIN! ASSASSIN!"

Subterranean and rolling echoes repeat the screeches of the owl, which seem gradually to die away in the central caverns of the earth. At this signal two large dogs, black as ebony, with eyes like a burning coal, chained to the Schoolmaster, open their jaws with deafening howls, and dance with unnatural antics round him.

By degrees, the last scene vanishes from the vapor, which still ascends. The gory lake now distils a new exhalation, green as the froth which rests on a stagnant pool.

At first is seen the bed of a canal, covered with moving and slimy mud, which seems composed of innumerable insects, twisting and doubling about in infinite complexity of fantastic shapes and horrible appearance—the whole invisible to the naked eye. But now, as by the solar microscope revealed, it is no longer mud, but a coagulated mass of living, crawling life; so closely packed and knotted, that the swell of the water scarcely moves this mud, or rather this curdled expanse of vermin. Above it flows slowly—slowly, the turbid water, which drags in its heavy course the filth exuding from all the sewers of a densely populated city—blood, offal, garbage, the carcasses of animals, refuse of all sorts. On a sudden, the Schoolmaster hears the noise of a body splashing in the water, and the disgusting fluid is dashed into his face. Through a multitude of bubbles which ascend to the surface of this Stygian pool, he sees a woman ingulfed, and struggling in its foul waters with her dying agonies; and he beholds himself and Chouette, fleeing from the margin of the canal, bearing a box wrapped in a black envelope. But all the agonies of the dying woman are visible to his disordered imagination. After the first plunge, he sees her ascend to the surface, and throw her arms about in unavailing efforts to buoy herself upon the pestiferous waves. The piercing desperate cry of her dying agony now reaches his ear—the low, distinct gurgling in the throat is heard, and the woman sinks once more in the frightful pool.

The owl which floats above him, mimicks the death-gurgle of the drowning woman, as she did the dying groans of the murdered drover; and in the midst of her peals of fiend-like laughter, repeats, "glow!" "glow!" "glow!" imitating the sound of the water, bubbling down the wind-pipe of the submerged victim: the subterranean echoes repeat the sound.

Sinking the second time, the struggling victim suffocates, breathing with spasmodic throes; but instead of air inhales the water. Her head is thrown backward in a final convulsion; her face and neck swells with a livid bloat; her arms grow stiff, and her feet spring with unnatural spasms. The black mud now seems to envelope her form, and ascend with her to the surface of the pool; and her body is alive with the convoluted mass of microscopic vermin. Floating for a moment, the corpse slowly sinks, feet foremost, into the slimy current. At times, the Schoolmaster seems to be face to face with the decomposing features of the corpse; its glassy eyes glare on him, and its gangrened lips move in speech. Although he seems to be far distant from this frightful image, he hears the fatal "glow!" "glow!" "glow!" murmured in his ears.

The responsive monster repeats the sound, flaps her broad wings, and cries:

"THE WOMAN OF THE CANAL SAINT MARTIN: ASSASSIN! ASSASSIN! ASSASSIN!"

The cavernous echoes repeat the cry—but now, instead of being lost in the centre of the vaulted earth, draw nearer and nearer, more thunder-like and deafening; and the Schoolmaster hears peals of laughter resound from pole to pole.

The last spectral scene slowly vanishes from the brigand's eyes.

The bloody pool changes to a brazen hue, grows gradually lighter and more brilliant, until it appears a lake of liquid lava, which seems to rise toward heaven like an immense water-spout of fire, and soon expands to the horizon a sea of brilliant flame. Its broad expanse of heat dazzles and burns the eyes of the suffering brigand; for, nailed to his seat, he cannot remove from the spectacle his fascinated gaze. Upon the surface of this burning ocean he sees, passing to and fro, the gigantic shades of his victims: "THE MAGIC LANTERN OF REMORSE! OF REMORSE!" shrieks the owl, with bursts of laughter and flapping of her wings.

In spite of the intolerable torment which the contemplation causes, the Schoolmaster cannot withdraw his eyes from the spectres that pass along the fiery naptha. A more frightful feeling still, now comes over him. Passing through all forms of torture, while gazing on that heated surface, he feels that his eyeballs are smelted by the flames, and finally calcine in their sockets, as in two red-hot iron crucibles; and suddenly, by a frightful miracle, after having *seen*, as much as felt, the successive transformation of his eyes into ashes, he relapses into the dark profound of his first blindness.

By some enchantment, his intense agonies are appeased. An aromatic breath, more fragrant than the balmy air of spring, oppressed by the aroma of myriads of dew-moistened wild flowers, distils a delicious coolness into his still burning sockets. The Schoolmaster hears the gentle breeze whispering through the foliage, and the murmur of a living fountain, bubbling from its pebbly bed. Myriads of birds warble their softest and sweetest fantasies in his ear; the gust of child-like voices chant airs of unearthly melody; and the winged anthem seems gently to ascend to its native heaven. A feeling of moral elevation, of gentleness and purity, the indescribable languor of fruition, now gradually falls upon his distempered spirit. His cheerful heart is buoyant with new delight; his mind is enraptured with the most pleasing fancies; his soul dissolves with the tenderest emotion; his whole being is surrendered to a bliss, of which no physical impression, however entrancing, can convey an idea. The Schoolmaster feels himself balancing, as upon wings, in the expanse of space, and soaring above mankind, leagues upon leagues, into a more refined ether.

* * * * * *

After enjoying, for some time, this preternatural felicity, the Schoolmaster relapses into the dark abyss of his habitual thoughts. He still dreams, but he is nothing more than the muzzled brigand, who blasphemes and lashes himself into a tumult of impotent wrath.

A solemn voice rebukes him: 'tis the tone of Rodolphe. The blind murderer shudders with affright; he is vaguely conscious that he still dreams, but the terror with which Rodolphe inspires him is so excessive, that he makes the most vigorous struggles to escape from the new vision. The voice speaks, and he is forced to listen. Its tones are melodious with sorrow and compassion: "Poor, miserable man!" said the voice, "the hour of your repentance has not yet arrived. God alone knows when it will dawn. The punishment of your crimes is still incomplete. You have suffered, but you have not expiated your innumerable crimes. By a freak of retributive justice, your accomplices have been converted into avenging furies: your tyrants and torturers are a woman and a child. When inflicting upon you a punishment as terrible as your crimes, I told you that my words would be remembered: '*You have most criminally abused your strength: I will paralyze your strength. The most vigorous have trembled before you: you shall tremble before the feeblest.*' You have left the obscure retreats where you might have lived in quietude and repentance, because you were afraid of silence and solitude. You have been filled with envy at the peaceful and quiet life of the laborers; but it was too late—too late! Almost defenceless, you again throw yourself into the midst of a gang of wretches and murderers. You have desired to distract your remorse by new crimes; you have thrown frantic challenges at him who divested you of the power of murdering your fellow-men; but it has all been in vain. In spite of your wickedness, your might, and your audacity, you are powerless. The thirst for crime devours you, but you cannot gratify it. In a fit of frenzied rage you would have just now raised a murderous arm against your wife. She sleeps defenceless under the same roof with yourself. You have a knife; her bed is not ten steps from your own; nothing saves her from your rage—nothing but your impotence. The dream which has just visited you, is a lesson of profound meaning and mysterious warning. The bloody lake where your victims appeared, is the gore which you have shed. The burning lava which succeeded it, is that remorse which should have possessed you, until the Almighty, in compassion for your long agony, might admit you to the ineffable delights of pardon. But it cannot be. No, no!

it cannot be! The[illegible] [illegible]ess: far from repenting, you daily view with regret your inability to perpetrate new crimes. A frightful and horrible futurity will result from the struggle between your ferocious thirst for blood, and the impossibility of satiating it; between your tyrannical habits, and the necessity of submitting to such cruel and feeble insects. Alas! miserable wretch!"

And the voice was silent, as if emotion had choked its utterance. The Schoolmaster felt his hair stand on end. What a frightful destiny that must be, which melted into tears even his tormentor!

"The fate reserved for you is so terrible, that if Almighty justice had designed that your sufferings should expiate the crimes of all mankind, a more frightful hell could not have been contrived. Wo! wo, to you! Inevitable destiny designs that you shall be continually conscious of the punishment which awaits you, and that you shall do nothing to avoid it—*let the future be revealed!*"

It seemed to the Schoolmaster that his sight was restored. He opened his eyes; he could see; but the sight presented to his vision, shocked his frame with such fearful impressions, that he uttered a piercing cry, and started suddenly from his torturing sleep.

CHAPTER XI. ..... THE LETTER.

THE clock of the farm of Bouqueval was striking nine in the morning, when Madam George entered quietly Fleur de Marie's room. The young girl's sleep was so disturbed, that she awoke instantly. A winter's sun, shining through curtains of damask bordered with pink, imparted a violet tinge to the atmosphere, and gave to the sweet face of the girl the bloom which it needed.

"Well, my child," said madam, seating herself upon Marie's bed, and kissing her on the forehead; "how do you feel this morning?"

"Better, madam, I thank you."

"You have not been aroused very early this morning?"

"No, madam."

"I am glad of it. I was fearful that the departure of the blind man and his son, who started early, might disturb your slumbers."

"Blind man and his son! Why did the poor people leave so early?"

"I know not. After leaving you last night more calm than when I first saw you, I went down to see them, but they had retired to rest. Father Chatelain told me that the blind man did not appear to have the perfect command of his reason, and all our people were struck with the kindness which his son displayed. But I fear that you have a slight fever this morning; you must not expose yourself to the atmosphere to-day."

"Excuse me, madam, I must go to the parsonage at five o'clock this evening; the curate expects me."

"I fear it would be imprudent. You cannot have passed a quiet night; your eyes are heavy, and your sleep cannot have been refreshing."

"It is true, I have been again visited with those terrifying dreams. I saw again the woman who tortured me in my childhood, and I started from my sleep in fear; it is a foolish weakness, of which I am ashamed."

"The weakness afflicts me, my child, when I see how it makes you suffer, poor girl!" said Madam George, with great tenderness, seeing the tears starting in Fleur de Marie's eyes.

The young girl threw herself upon the bosom of her adopted mother.

"Holy Virgin! What ails you, Marie? you alarm me."

"You are so kind to me, Madam George, that I reproach myself for not having told you what last night I confessed to the curate. To-morrow, he will disclose it to you himself: 't would be too painful for me to repeat it."

"Come, come, my child, be reasonable; I am sure there is more worthy of praise than of blame, in the weighty secret which you have imparted to our good Abbe. Do not weep, your tears distress me."

"Pardon me, madam: but for the last two days there have been moments when my heart was ready to break with sorrow. Tears, against all my power exerted to restrain them, filled my eyes. I have been harassed with dark presentiments: I fear some misfortune awaits me."

"Marie, I shall be compelled to scold you, if you surrender yourself to such imaginary terrors. Have we not enough of real sorrows to encounter?"

"You are right, madam: I am very wrong, and I will endeavor to conquer my weakness. You would certainly pardon me, if you knew how much I reproach myself for not [illegible] appearing cheerful, smiling and happy. I fear that my sorrow may appear to you to be ingratitude."

Madam George was about to console Goualeuse, when Claudine knocked at the door.

"What is wanting, Claudine?" asked Madam George.

"Peter has just arrived, madam, from Arnouville, in the gig of Madam Dubreuil, and has brought this letter for you, which he wishes you to read immediately." Madam George read aloud what follows.

MY DEAR MADAM GEORGE:

You would oblige me much and relieve me from a serious embarrassment, by coming as soon as you can make it convenient, to the farm. Peter will bring you in the gig and return with you this afternoon. Indeed, I am at a loss what to do; Mr. Dubreuil has gone to Poutaise, to sell the wool, and I have no resource but to you and Marie. Clara sends her love to her dear little sister, and awaits her arrival with impatience. Try to be here to take breakfast with us at eleven o'clock.

Your very affectionate friend,

M. DUBREUIL.

"What can the difficulty be?" said Madam George to Fleur de Marie.

"The tone of Madam Dubreuil's letter, indicates that nothing serious can be the matter. Shall I go with you, madam?" asked Goualeuse.

"It is not perhaps very prudent, for it is quite cold; but after all, it may divert your mind, and if you will wrap up yourself warm, the short ride may be of service to you."

"But, Madam George," said Marie, reflecting; "the good curate expects me at the parsonage at 5 o'clock this evening."

"That is true; but we shall return before that hour, I promise you."

"I shall be very happy to see Mademoiselle Clara."

"Again," said Madam George, gently reproaching her; "again *Mademoiselle* Clara; does she say Mademoiselle Marie, speaking of you?"

"No, madam," replied Goualeuse, with downcast eyes; "it is that I ——"

"You? you are a cruel child, who only think of how to torment yourself; you have already forgotten the promise which you made me, but a moment since. Dress yourself quickly, and in very warm clothing, my child; we can arrive at Arnouville before eleven." Then leaving the room with Claudine, Madam George said to her:

"Tell Peter to wait; we will be ready to go in a few moments."

CHAPTER XII.

HALF an hour after this conversation, Madam George and Marie seated themselves in one of those spacious gigs which usually belong to wealthy farmers in the environs of Paris. Drawn by a powerful dray-horse, and driven by Peter, it rolled rapidly upon the grassy road which divides Bouqueval from Arnouville.

The vast buildings and out-houses connected with the farm of Arnouville, gave some idea of the magnificence of the dowery which Cesarine de Noriment had brought to her husband, the Duke de Lucenay. The cracking of Peter's whip informed Madam Dubreuil, of the approach of Fleur de Marie and Madam George. Alighting from the gig, they were joyfully welcomed by the farmière and her daughter.

Madam Dubreuil was about fifty years of age, with a mild and affable expression of countenance. Her daughter was a pretty brunette, with blue eyes and rosy cheeks, and a look of innocence and kindness.

To her great surprise, when Clara came to kiss her, Goualeuse observed that she wore a peasant's frock, instead of being dressed, as she usually was, like a young lady.

"Why, Clara; you are disguised as a country girl," said Madam George, kissing her.

"She imitates her sister Marie in everything," said Madam Dubreuil. "She would not cease complaining, until she had a complete suit of peasant's clothes like your niece; but do not let us mind the caprices of young girls. Madam George, I must tell you my troubles."

On entering the parlor with her mother and the guests, Clara seated herself near Marie; offered her friend the best place by the fire, took Goualeuse's hands in her own, to assure herself that they were not cold, kissed her once more, and called her a wicked sister, because she suffered such long intervals to elapse between her visits. If the reader will call to mind the conversation of Fleur de Marie with the curate, he will understand

with what mingled emotions of humility, happiness, and fear, she must have received these affectionate and artless caresses.

"Well, what has happened to you, my dear Madam Dubreuil?" said Madam George; "in what way can I serve you?"

"Oh, in many things. I must explain to you first, what perhaps you already know, that this farm belongs properly to the Duchess de Lucenay. We deal with her directly, without the intervention of the steward of the Duke."

"Indeed! I was not aware of that."

"You will see shortly why I have informed you of it. It is then, either to the Duchess or to the head waiting-maid, Mademoiselle Simon, that we pay the rents. The Duchess is so very good, although a little pressing, that it is really a pleasure to deal with her. Dubreuil and myself would do anything to oblige her. Indeed, it is quite natural; for I remember her when she was a little girl, and came here with her father, the late Prince de Norimont. She has recently asked us for her six months' rent in advance. Forty thousand francs cannot be found very easily; but we had fortunately reserved precisely that sum, for Clara's dowry, and the next day the Duchess received her rent in gold. These great ladies are so extravagant; and yet, it is only within the past year that the Duchess has been so punctual in demanding her rent. Formerly she seemed never to be in need of money; but now it is very different, I assure you."

"But I do not come any nearer learning in what manner I can serve you, my dear Madam Dubreuil," said Madam George.

"I will come to the point. I have merely told you this, to show you that the Duchess has great confidence in us; and besides, when she was thirteen years old, she was the godmother, and the Prince de Norimont the godfather, of Clara, to whom they have always shown great kindness. Last night I received by express, the following letter from the Duchess:

MY DEAR MADAM DUBREUIL:

I wish you to see that the small pavilion in the orchard is put in a suitable condition, to be occupied by the day after to-morrow. Have all the necessary furniture conveyed into it, carpets, curtains, &c. so that nothing may be wanting; and especially, let it be as *comfortable* as possible.*

"Do you hear, Madam George? 'comfortable,' and the word is underlined; yet—" said Madam Dubreuil, looking at her friend with a meditative and embarrassed air, and then proceeded:

Have a fire kept in the pavilion night and day, to dispel the dampness, for it has not been occupied for some time: you must treat the person who comes to reside in it, as you would *myself*. The letter which that person will hand to you, will inform you what I expect from your ever obliging zeal. I rely upon it once more, without any fear that you will consider it abused: I know how kind and devoted you are. Adieu, my dear Madam Dubreuil; give my love to my pretty godchild, and believe in my affectionate sentiments. NORIMONT DE LUCENAY."

P. S. The person who is to reside in the pavilion will arrive the day after to-morrow, in the evening; do not neglect to make it as *comfortable* as possible.

"You hear again that strange word, underlined?" said Madam Dubreuil, returning the letter to her pocket.

"Well, this is perfectly simple," said Madam George.

"How simple! the Duchess wants the small pavilion as '*comfortable* as possible,' and that is the very reason I have asked you to come here. Clara and myself have puzzled our brains to find what that word means, but we cannot make it out; and yet Clara has been at the boarding-school at Villiers le Bel, and has won, I do not know how many premiums in History and Geography; but with all her accomplishments, she does not know the meaning of that outlandish word. It must be a word used at court, or in the fashionable world only; at any rate, you can perceive how embarrassing it is to me. The Duchess wishes particularly, that the pavilion should be 'comfortable;' and underlines the word and repeats it in a postscript, and yet we cannot understand its meaning."

"I can explain to you the great mystery," said Madam George, smiling. "'Comfortable,' in this case, means that the room shall be convenient, warm, agreeable, and habitable—in short, that nothing shall be wanting, to render it a pleasant abode; that there shall be everything that is necessary, but no superfluities."

"Is it so? Well; I understand, but am not the less embarrassed."

"How so?"

"The Duchess speaks about carpets, furniture, and other *et ceteras;* but we have no carpets here, and all our furniture is very simple. And again, I do not know whether the person who is to come is a gentleman or lady, and everything must be ready by to-morrow night. What shall I do! what shall I do! We have no furnishing establishments here. Truly, Madam George, it is perplexing in the extreme."

"But, mother," said Clara, "suppose you take the furniture from my room; and until some other is provided for me, I can go and spend a few days with Marie, at Bouqueval."

"Your furniture, my child! is it fine enough?" said Madam Dubreuil, shrugging her shoulders; "is it enough—enough 'comfortable,' as the Duchess says? But where in the world did she find that word?"

"The pavilion there has been uninhabited for some time."

"Yes; it is the little white building that stands alone at the end of the orchard. The Prince built it for the Duchess before she was married, and when she visited the farm with her father, they used to reside in it. In the pavilion there are three pretty rooms, and at the end of the garden there is a Swiss dairy, where the Duchess, when she was young, used to play the dairy-maid. Since her marriage we have seen her but twice, and at both times she spent a few hours in the little pavilion—the first time was about six months ago, and she came with——"

But reflecting that Clara and Maria were present, Madam Dubreuil checked herself.

"Chatting in this manner," continued she, "will not relieve my embarrassment; do help me, my dear Madam George."

"Tell me, then, how the pavilion is now furnished."

"There is hardly any furniture in it. In the largest room there is a straw matting on the floor, a cane sofa, arm-chair to match, a table and a few ordinary chairs, and that is all; far from 'comfortable,' you see."

"Well, in your place, I will tell you what I would do: I would send an intelligent man to Paris; for it is now but eleven o'clock."

"There cannot be a better man to go, than our Supervisor."

"Very well: in two hours he can reach Paris, and can go to an upholsterer, or the Chaussee d'Antin, never mind which, and provide the articles which I will put down on a piece of paper, when I have seen what is wanting in the pavilion, cost what they may."

"Oh! to be sure; provided that the Duchess be pleased, never mind the cost."

"Your messenger will tell the upholsterer, that all the articles on the list must be here to-night; as well as three or four of his men, to arrange the carpets, &c.: cost what it may."

"They can come by Gonesse's carriage; it leaves Paris at eight o'clock in the evening."

"And, as all that is necessary is to arrange the furniture, nail down the carpets, and hang the curtains, everything can be ready by to-morrow night."

"My good Madam George, from what trouble you have relieved me: I never should have thought of what you have proposed. Be so kind as to make a list of what is wanted, in order that the pavilion may be——"

"'Comfortable.' Yes, I will."

"Oh dear! one more difficulty. We do not know whether it is a gentleman or a lady, that we are to expect: the Duchess, in her letter, says '*person*,' and that is not very definite."

"Furnish the room as if you expected a lady; and if, after all, it should turn out to be a gentleman, it will be none the worse for him."

"You are right—always right."

A servant now came to inform the party that breakfast was ready.

"We will breakfast soon," said Madam George. "But while I am writing the list of what is necessary, do you, Madam Dubreuil, have the three rooms measured, that we may know the quantity of carpeting that it is necessary to order."

"Well, I will give instructions to our supervisor."

"Madam Dubreuil," continued the servant, "the milk-woman from Stains is here; she has brought her furniture in a little cart, drawn by a donkey."

"Poor woman!" said Madam Dubreuil, compassionately.

"Who is this woman?" asked Madam George.

"A peasant, from Stains: who owned cows, and was in the habit of going every morning to Paris, to sell milk. Her husband was a farrier, and having occasion to purchase some iron, he went one day to the city, and agreed to meet his wife at the corner of the street, where she was in the habit of selling her milk. Unfortunately, the woman had selected a very disreputable quarter of the city for her trade; and when her husband returns, he finds her disputing with some villains, who had upset her milk in the gutter. The farrier tried to settle the dispute; they abused him in return: from words it came to blows, and in the fight, he received a stab, which caused his death."

"It is horrible!" exclaimed Madam George. "Well, has the murderer been arrested?"

* Comfortable, is a Gallicised word, lately introduced into the French language, and seldom used except by the extremely fashionable.

"Unhappily, he has not: he made his escape in the melee, although the widow is sure that she could identify him if she saw him, for she had frequently seen him before, with some of his companions, who haunt that part of Paris; but thus far, all her researches have failed to discover the murderer. In short, since the death of her husband, in order to pay some debts, the milk-woman has been obliged to sell her cows and the piece of ground, which was all that she owned in the world. The farmer of the château of Stains, has recommended her to me as an excellent creature, honest as she is poor. She has three children, the oldest of whom is not thirteen. I had a vacant place on the farm, and I gave it to her; she has now come to establish herself in it."

"Your kindness does not surprise me, Madam Dubreuil."

"Will you go, Clara, and show the poor woman her dwelling, while I go and tell the supervisor to prepare himself to start for Paris?"

"Yes, mother; Marie will accompany me."

"Certainly; you cannot be separated for a moment."

"As for me," said Madam George, seating herself by the table, "I intend to commence my list; for we must return to Bouqueval by four o'clock."

"At four! you are in great haste," said Madam Dubreuil.

"Marie has to be at the parsonage at five."

"Oh! if her engagement is with the good Abbé Laporte, it is sacred," said Madam Dubreuil. "I am going to give my orders," continued she; "and as the children have a great many things to say to each other, we must give them an opportunity of speaking alone."

"We must leave by three o'clock," said Madam George.

"That is settled," replied the farmière; "but let me thank you once more for your kind suggestions. I am rejoiced that I thought of sending for you."

While Madam George was writing, Madam Dubreuil left the room through one door, and the two girls departed by the other, with the servant who had announced the arrival of the milk-woman from Stains."

"Where is the poor woman?" asked Clara.

"She is in the barn-yard, with her children, her cart, and her donkey, Mademoiselle."

"You will see the poor woman, Marie," said Clara, taking her companion's arm; "how sad she is, and how pale she looks in her full mourning! The last time she came to see mother, she almost broke my heart. She wept bitterly while speaking of her husband; then all at once, she would dry her tears and become furious with rage, while speaking of his murderer. Her resentment was natural, but very frightful. Poor thing! How wretched some people are! Is it not so, Marie?"

"Oh, yes, indeed!" replied Goualeuse, sighing; "there are many people very unhappy: you are right, Mademoiselle."

"Come, now!" said Clara, stamping her small foot upon the ground, as if displeased; "you have again called me Mademoiselle: you must be angry with me, Marie."

"Me? no, indeed!"

"Well, then, why do you call me Mademoiselle? You know that my mother and Madam George have both rebuked you for it, and if you do not reform, I will have you scolded again."

"Excuse me, Clara: I was absent-minded."

"Absent-minded! when you meet me after so many days of separation!" said Clara, grieved: "absent-minded! no, no, that cannot be it. I must conclude, Marie, that you are proud."

Fleur de Marie turned deadly pale, but made no reply.

At sight of Goualeuse, a female dressed in mourning, uttered a cry of mingled anger and dread. 'Twas the identical milk-woman who sold milk to Fleur de Marie, when she lived in the *tapis-franc* of the ogress!

CHAPTER XIII. ..... THE MILK-WOMAN.

The scene which we are about to describe, occurred in one of the yards of the farm, in the presence of the laborers and dairy-maids, who were returning from their work at the usual dinner hour. The small cart, containing the rough furniture of the widow, was seen with the donkey, under one of the sheds; and a little boy twelve years old, assisted by two younger children, was engaged in unloading the cart. The milk-woman, dressed entirely in black, was about forty years of age, with a coarse, masculine, and resolute face; and in her eyes were marks of recent tears. At the sight of Fleur de Marie, she uttered a frightful scream; pain, revenge, or wrath contracted her face, and rushing upon Goualeuse, she seized her by the arm, and exclaimed, showing her to the people of the farm:

"Here is the wretch who knows the assassin that killed my husband! I have seen her twenty times speaking with the brigand, when I sold milk at the corner of the rue Vieille Draperie: she bought of me a penny's worth every morning. Yes, she knows the scoundrel! for like all her fellows, she is connected with a gang of thieves and robbers. Oh! you cannot escape me, you little wretch!" exclaimed the woman, exasperated by her unjust suspicions, while she seized the other arm of Fleur de Marie; who, bewildered and amazed, had attempted to make her escape.

Clara, stupefied by the suddenness of the assault, had not been able to open her lips; but, excited by this new aggression, she exclaimed:

"You must be deranged; your sorrows have turned your head. You are greatly mistaken."

"Mistaken, am I?" said the woman, with sneering irony of tone; "no, no, I am not! Look, how pale the wretch already turns, and how her teeth chatter! The police will force you to open your mouth. You shall go with me to the mayor's: do you hear! You need not resist: I have a pretty strong grip, and I could carry you, if it was necessary."

"Insolent woman!" exclaimed Clara, exasperated; "leave this place instantly. How dare you treat in this manner my friend—my sister?"

"Your sister, Mademoiselle! you must be deranged yourself," answered the woman roughly. "A vagabond your sister! whom I have seen training along the streets of the Cité for six months!"

At these words, contemptuous words against Fleur de Marie were muttered by the laborers, who naturally sympatized with the milk-woman, belonging to their own rank in life, and whose misfortunes seriously affected them.

The three children, hearing the excited voice of their mother, ran to her weeping, though entirely ignorant of the cause of her emotion. The sight of these bereaved orphans, all dressed in black, increased the irritation which had been excited in the minds of the laborers against Fleur de Marie.

Clara, terrified with these threatening demonstrations, said to the laborers, with an afflicted tone, "Take this woman away, I beg of you; her grief has driven her mad. Marie, Marie, excuse the poor heart-broken woman; she knows not what she is saying."

Goualeuse, pale and motionless, stood with her head dropped before the prying glances of the incensed laborers; and, almost senseless by the sudden shock her feelings had received, made no resistance to the passionate grasp of the widow.

Clara, attributing her emotion to the fright which such a scene must necessarily inspire, renewed her prayers to the laborers.

"Do you not hear me? I order you to take away that woman, since she persists in her insults; and as a punishment for her falsehoods, she shall not have the situation which my mother has promised her: she shall not place her feet upon the farm for the remainder of her life."

Not one of the laborers offered to obey the injunctions of Clara, and one even had the audacity to say, "But, Mademoiselle, if she is not a vagabond, and is not acquainted with the murderer of this woman's husband, she can justify herself before the Mayor."

"I repeat to you," said Clara to the milk-woman, "you shall not remain upon the farm, unless you instantly ask this young lady's pardon for your insulting falsehoods!"

"You expel me, Mademoiselle! very well," said the woman in a bitter tone. "Come with me, my poor little orphans," continued she, embracing her children; "load the cart again—we will go and earn our bread elsewhere: the good God will have pity upon us. But although we depart, we will carry with us this abandoned wretch, who will be obliged to denounce the murderer of my poor husband, for she knows the whole gang; and because you are rich, Mademoiselle," added she, addressing Clara, "because you happen to have friends among such creatures, you should not, on that account, be so hard upon poor people."

"That is true," said a laborer; "the milk-woman is in the right."

"Poor woman!" said another.

"She is perfectly right: some one has murdered her husband, and is she not entitled to satisfaction? She cannot be prevented from doing her best to discover the malefactor," said a third.

"It is unjust to turn her away."

"Is it the poor widow's fault, if the acquaintances of Mademoiselle are no better than they should be?"

"A good honest woman, the mother of a family, should not be compelled to give place to a vagabond."

The murmurs began to grow threatening, when Clara exclaimed, "God be thanked! here is my mother."

Madam Dubreuil, returning from the pavilion, was actually passing through the yard.

"Well Clara—well Marie," said Madam Dubreuil, approaching the group, "come to breakfast—come quick, my children, it is already late."

"Mother!" exclaimed Clara, "do protect Marie against this woman's insults," and she pointed to the widow: "do send her away. If you only knew what indecent falsehoods she has spoken!"

"How dares she?"

"Yes, mother; see how my poor little sister trembles: she can scarcely support herself. It is a disgrace that she should be insulted while under our protection. Oh! Marie, forgive us, I pray you."

"But what is the meaning of all this?" asked Madam Dubreuil, surveying with anxiety the depressed countenance of Marie.

"Madam will do us justice," murmured the laborers.

"It is this, Madam Dubreuil—you will now be turned out of doors," said the widow to Fleur de Marie.

"Can it be possible!" said Madam Dubreuil to the milkwoman, who still held Fleur de Marie's arm, "can it be possible, that you dare use such language to a friend of my daughter's? Is this the way you repay me for my kindness? Release this young person instantly!"

"I respect you, madam, and I feel grateful for your goodness," said the widow, relinquishing her grasp; "but before you expel me, with my children, from the farm, ask this vagabond if she knows me: perhaps she will not have the impudence to deny it."

"Great Heaven! do you hear what the woman says?" exclaimed Madam Dubreuil, struck with amazement.

"Is your name Goualeuse, or is it not?" exclaimed the milkwoman.

"Yes," said the unfortunate girl in a low voice, without raising her eyes to Madam Dubreuil; "I was once called by that name."

"Do you see," said the angry laborers; "she owns it, she owns it!"

"Owns what?" said Madam Dubreuil, slightly startled by Fleur de Marie's assent.

"Permit her to reply, madam," said the woman; "she will own soon that she resided in an infamous house in rue aux Fèves, in the Cité, where I sold to her a penny's worth of milk every morning; she will own also, that I have frequently seen her speak with the murderer of my husband. Oh! she knows him well—a pale young man who smoked all the time, who wore a cap, a blouse, and had his hair long; she must know his name. Is it not true? will you answer me, wretch?" exclaimed the milk-woman.

"I may have spoken with the murderer of your husband in the streets of the Cité, for there are unfortunately many murderers there," said Fleur de Marie in a faint voice; "but I do not know to whom you allude."

"How! What does she say?" exclaimed Madam Dubreuil with horror: "has she spoken with assassins?"

"Creatures like her, know no other persons," said the widow.

Madam Dubreuil was at first astonished at this strange revelation, confirmed as it was, by the last words of Fleur de Marie: but now the whole truth flashing upon her mind, she moved back from the unfortunate girl, with signs of disgust and horror. Roughly drawing her daughter toward her, (who had approached near to her former friend to sustain her in this grievous trial,) the farmière exclaimed:

"What an abomination! Beware, Clara; do not approach the wretch! How could Madam George receive her into her house! How could she presume to introduce her to me, to be the companion of my daughter! Holy Virgin! it is horrible. I can hardly believe what I have heard with my own ears. Madam George is incapable of such iniquity; she must have been deceived, like ourselves."

Clara, frightened and subdued by this cruel scene, could scarcely believe that she was not in a dream. Her innocent mind did not understand the full force of the reproaches heaped upon her friend: her heart was swelling with grief, her eyes filled with tears, when she saw Fleur de Marie sad and speechless as a convicted criminal before his judges.

"Come, come, my daughter," said Madam Dubreuil to Clara; then turning to Goualeuse said, "as for you, infamous creature, God will punish you for your hypocrisy in suffering an angel of virtue, like my daughter, to call you her friend, her sister—you! the companion of the vilest of all mankind. What daring! to presume to frequent the society of honest people, when you deserve to go and join your equals in a prison."

"Yes, yes," exclaimed the laborers, "she must go to prison; she knows the murderer."

"She may be his accomplice, too."

"You see that there is justice in heaven?" said the widow, threatening Fleur de Marie with her fist.

"As for you, my good woman," said Madam Dubreuil to the widow, "far from dismissing you from your place, I am grateful to you for having unveiled the hypocrisy of this wretched creature."

"That's right, that's right; our mistress does us justice," said the laborers.

"Come, Clara," continued the farmière; "Madam George will explain to us her conduct, or else I shall never desire to see her again; for if she has not herself been deceived, her conduct is inexcusable."

"But, mother, do look at poor Marie."

"Let her die with shame; so much the better. Despise her as I do, my daughter; do not stay a moment with her. She is one of those creatures, that a girl like you cannot, with propriety, associate with."

"Dear mother," said Clara, resisting her attempts to force her away, "I do not understand what this means. Marie may be to blame; but, good Heaven! my mother! see, the poor girl is fainting."

"Oh! Mademoiselle Clara, I entreat your forgiveness. It has been much against my will that I have deceived you. I have reproached myself most bitterly for it," said Fleur de Marie, casting upon her protectress a glance of holy gratitude.

"My dear mother, are you absolutely unmoved by pity?" said Clara, in a melting tone.

"Pity! for her? No, indeed! If Madam George did not intend to take her away, I would have her thrown into the street, as if she were a leper," said Madam Dubreuil, bearing away her daughter; who, casting a last look upon Fleur de Marie, said: "I know not of what they accuse you, Marie. Be assured that I believe you guiltless: I love you as ever."

"Be silent! hold your tongue!" said Madam Dubreuil, placing her finger upon the lips of her daughter. "Hold your tongue. Happily, every one here is a witness that, after she was exposed in her true colors, you have not been for a moment alone with that lost creature. Is it not so, my friends?"

"Yes, yes, Madam Dubreuil," said one of the laborers; "we are all witnesses, that Mademoiselle Clara did not remain for an instant with the vagabond; who is undoubtedly a thief, since she is acquainted with murderers."

The farmière dragged Clara away, leaving Goualeuse in the midst of the threatning group, who were closing around her.

In spite of the reproaches of Madam Dubreuil, her presence, and that of Clara, had in some degree restrained the indignation of the laborers, and diminished the fear of Fleur de Marie. But after the females had departed; and she was left alone, to the mercy of the peasants, her strength failed her, and she was obliged to lean against a deep trough, from which the horses of the farm drank, for support. Nothing could be more affecting than the attitude of the unfortunate girl. Nothing could be more fearful than the words and gestures of the excited peasantry around her. Leaning almost upright against the stone receptacle of water, her head bent, her face covered with her hands, her bosom veiled by the square corners of the handkerchief which fell from her cap, the immovable Goualeuse stood like a living emblem of grief and resignation.

A few steps from her, the widow of the murdered man, with a triumphant expression of countenance, and with her rage stimulated by the encouragement which Madam Dubreuil had afforded it; pointed out the girl to her children and the laborers, with gestures of contempt and hatred.

The peasantry collected together, did not conceal the emotions which excited them. Their rough, coarse visages, expressed at the same time indignation and an insulting derision. The females, as usual, were the most shocked and indignant. The touching beauty of Goualeuse was not the least exciting cause of their outraged sense of decorum. Males and females could not forgive Fleur de Marie, for receiving from their mistress the civilities which she only tendered to her equals. Another cause stimulated their rage: some of the laborers at Arnouville, not having been able to procure sufficiently good testimonials to be admitted to the farm of Bouqueval, were disposed to visit their disappointment upon Fleur de Marie's head. The first impulse of unrefined men always flies to extremes: there are either superlatively excellent, or frightfully wicked. But they become exceedingly dangerous, when a crowd of them believe that they are authorized in their acts of violence and

cruelty, by real or apparent provocation. But few of Gouaiense's persecutors were sincere in their professions of outraged modesty, by contact with a person who had associated with the class of people with whom she was represented as familiar; and their exquisite sensibility was assumed, for the occasion, for the purpose of justifying their malicious intentions. The sole additional stimulus which the rage of the rustics needed, was furnished by the example of their imprecatory mistress.

"We must take her to the Mayor's," said one.

"Yes, yes; and if she wont walk she must be pushed."

"And she dares to dress like an honest country girl!" said one of the ugliest of the farm maids.

"With such a saint-like face, one would absolve her without confession."

"She has had the impudence to appear at church."

"Why not admit her to the communion at once."

"And she must associate with our mistresses, also."

"As if we were not good enough for her."

"Fortunately, everybody has their turn."

"Oh! you will have to speak and denounce the assassin," said the widow. "You are one of the same gang. It seems to me that I saw you with him on that very day. Come, come; there is no use of crying after your character has once been exposed. Show us your face. Is it too good to be seen?" And the widow pulled down with violence the hands with which the young girl covered her face. Gouaiense, overwhelmed with shame at first, now suffered from extreme terror, in finding herself alone and defenceless in the circle of furious rustics. She dropped her hands, turned toward the milk-woman her suppliant eyes, and said to her, in a voice of touching sweetness:

"My dear madam, it is now two months since I have lived at the farm of Bouqueval. How could I have been present at the misfortune of which you speak?"

The timid voice of Fleur de Marie was drowned by the shout of—"To the Mayor's with her! To the Mayor's!"

"Come along—come along, my pretty one."

And the menacing group drew nearer and nearer to Gouaiense; while she crossed her hands in the attitude of submission, and turned her large eyes upon either side, as if imploring some invisible protector.

"Oh! you need not look around; Mademoiselle Clara is no longer here to protect you. You cannot escape us now."

"Alas! madam, I do not wish to escape from you. I desire nothing but to reply to the questions which an authorized magistrate may propound, if it can be of any service to you. But what harm have I done to all these people around me, which they seem desirous of revenging!"

"You have had the impudence to associate with our mistress upon equal terms; when we, who are a thousand times better than you, are not admitted to her parlor: that's what you have done."

"And then, why did you wish to drive away from here this poor widow and her children!" said another.

"It is not I: it's Mademoiselle Clara, who wished——"

"Let us alone, then," continued the laborer, interrupting her; "you have not even asked her forgiveness: you was willing to see her bread snatched from her."

"No, no; she has not asked forgiveness."

"She is a bad creature!"

"A poor widow, mother of three children."

"If I have not asked her forgiveness," said Fleur de Marie, "it is because I have not been able to utter a word."

"You was able to speak to the assassins."

As ever occurs in popular commotions, these countrymen, more foolish than wicked, irritated and excited, were *intoxicated* by the noise of their own words; and worked themselves into the belief, that the abuses and menaces they lavished upon their victim, were well meant.

Thus it sometimes happens, that the lower classes will unintentionally reach by degrees a height of excitement, productive of most unjust and ferocious acts.

The menacing circle of farmers approached nearer and nearer to Fleur de Marie. All were speaking and gesticulating: the widow of the blacksmith could no longer restrain herself.

Gouaiense, separated only from the deep pond by the slight parapet on which she was leaning, was fearful of being overturned into the water. With her supplicating hands extended toward them, she exclaimed:

"Oh! God! what do you require of me! For pity's sake, do not harm me!"

The milk-woman continued her gestures, and approaching still nearer, she almost thrust her fists into Fleur de Marie's face; who, casting herself backward with fright, exclaimed:

"I beseech you, madam, not to come so near; you will push me into the water."

These words of Fleur de Marie aroused the rude laborers into the determination of practicing one of those country jests, which often leaves the victim half dead upon the spot. One of the most furious, cried out, "A ducking: give her a ducking."

"Yes, yes; to the water, to the water with her," was repeated on all sides with bursts of laughter and frantic applause.

"That 's it, a good ducking: it will not kill her."

"It will teach her never to meddle again among honest people."

"Yes, yes; to the water, to the water."

"The ice happens to be broken this morning."

"The vagabond will not forget the good people of the farm of Arnouville!"

On hearing these inhuman cries, these savage jests—on noticing the exasperated countenances of these ignorant and irritated beings, who advanced toward her, Fleur de Marie experienced a death-like fear.

To this first fright, soon succeeded a kind of bitter resignation. The future appeared to her in colors so dark and dismal, that she mentally thanked Heaven for thus rescuing her from her fate, and abbreviating her sorrows. She no longer complained: she fell slowly upon her knees, crossed both hands piously upon her breast, closed her eyes, and waited in a prayerful attitude.

The laborers, surprised at the attitude and mute resignation of Gouaiense, hesitated a moment to carry into effect their savage project; but aroused from their weakness by their female companion, they again commenced their boisterous vociferations, to encourage themselves in the perpetration of their wicked design.

Two of the most furious were about to seize Fleur de Marie, when a trembling and agitated voice was heard to exclaim:

"Stop!"

At the same moment Madam George, who had made her way through the crowd, reached Gouaiense, who was still kneeling; took her by the arms, and raising her up, exclaimed:

"Arise my child, arise my dear girl: before God alone you should kneel."

The expression, the attitude of Madam George, was so courageously commanding, that the crowd drew back and remained silent.

The face of Madam George, usually pale, was flushed with indignation. She cast upon the laborers a stern look, and said to them in a loud and determined voice, "Miserable wretches! are you not ashamed thus to inflict violence upon this unhappy child!"

"She is a——"

"She is my daughter!" cried Madam George, interrupting one of the laborers. "The Abbé Laporte, whom every one blesses and venerates, loves her and protects her; and those whom he esteems, every one should respect."

These simple words had an imposing effect upon the laborers. In the country, the curate of Bouqueval was regarded as a saint, and many of the countrymen were not ignorant of the interest he took in Gouaiense. Some low murmurs, however, were again heard. Madam George understood their meaning, and exclaimed:

"Were this unhappy young girl the most debased of all creatures—were she totally forsaken and abandoned by all mankind—your conduct toward her could not be less odious. For what would you punish her? And besides, what right have you? Where is your authority? Might? It is shameful and cowardly, for men thus to abuse a feeble and unprotected young girl. Come, Marie—come, my beloved child: let us return home. There, at least, you are known and appreciated."

Madam George took the arm of Fleur de Marie; the laborers, confused and abashed at the recollection of their brutal conduct, respectfully dispersed.

The widow alone advanced, and said resolutely to Madam George:

"This child shall not leave here, until she has given her deposition before the Mayor, in relation to the murder of my poor husband."

"My dear friend," said Madam George, with an effort, "my daughter has no deposition to make here; at a future period, if justice deems it advisable to call for her testimony, she will be made aware of it, and I will accompany her. Until then, no one has the right to interrogate her."

"But, madam, I tell you——"

Madam George interrupted the milk-woman, and answered her sternly:

"The misfortune of which you are the victim, can scarcely excuse your conduct. One day you will regret the violence that you have so rashly and imprudently excited. Mademoiselle Marie lives with me at the Bouqueval farm; so inform the Judge who received your first declaration: we will await his orders."

The widow could make no reply to these sensible words; she seated herself upon the parapet of the pond, and commenced weeping bitterly, and embracing her children.

In a few minutes after this scene, Pierre brought up the cabriolet. Madam George and Fleur de Marie entered it, on their return to Bouqueval.

In passing before the farm-house of Arnouville, Goualeuse perceived Clara; she was weeping, half concealed behind a Venetian blind, partially opened. Fleur de Marie waved her handkerchief to her, as a sign of adieu.

CHAPTER XIV. ..... CONSOLATIONS

Ah! madam, what shame for me, what sorrow for you!" said Fleur de Marie, to her adopted mother, when she again found herself alone with her, in the attic-parlor at the Bouqueval farm. "Without doubt, you are offended with Madam Dubreuil, and solely on my account. Oh! my fatal presentiments! God has punished me for having thus deceived this lady and her daughter. I am the cause of a variance between you and your friend."

"My friend is an excellent woman, my dear child. She has a poor weak head, but is not devoid of a good heart; and to-morrow, I am sure, she will regret her foolish passion of to-day."

"Alas! do not believe that I would justify her in accusing you; your kindness for me, perhaps, has blinded you. Put yourself in the place of Madam Dubreuil. To learn that the companion of her cherished daughter—was—what I have been—tell me, could you, under such circumstances, blame the indignation of a loving mother?"

Madam George, unfortunately, could not utter a word in reply to this question of Fleur de Marie, who continued with energy:

"The disgraceful, ignominious scene through which I have passed before so many, to-morrow will be known everywhere. It is not for myself, that I fear; but who knows now, but that the reputation of Clara will be for ever tainted, because she has been associated with me, and called me her friend and sister. I should have followed my first impulse, and resisted the desire that drew me toward Mademoiselle Dubreuil; and at the risk of inspiring her aversion, avoided the earnest friendship that she so ingenuously proffered me. But I forgot the wide abyss which yawned between us; you see now how I am punished for it. Oh! cruelly punished, for I shall be, perhaps, the cause of an irreparable wrong to this young person, so virtuous and so good."

"My child," said Madam George, after a few moment's reflection, "you wrong yourself, by indulging in such sorrowful reproaches. Your past life has been guilty, but have you not, by your repentance, merited and obtained the protection of our venerable curate? Under his auspices, and under mine, were you not presented to Madam Dubreuil? Did she not freely evince an affection toward you, that was inspired solely by your good attributes? Was it not she, who asked you to call Clara your sister? And finally, as I have already said, I would not, and ought not to have made known to her the past, and thereby rendered your life more painful, aware as I was of your repentance; perhaps causing you to despair of gaining that universal esteem which you so well merit, by exciting the contempt of those who, as unfortunate and abandoned as you have been, have never, like you, preserved the same secret instinct of honor and of virtue. The revelation of this woman, it is true, is grievous and unfortunate; but was it my duty to have anticipated it, and by such a course, have sacrificed your future repose to an event that was almost improbable?"

Ah, madam! nothing could more strongly prove my false and miserable position, than the fact, that owing to your affection for me you have been compelled to conceal the past; and that the mother of Clara has also had just cause to despise me on account of that past. To despise me, as all the world will hereafter despise me; for the occurrence at Arnouville will spread in every direction: all will know it. Oh! I shall die of shame! I shall no longer be able to meet another's gaze."

"Not even mine? poor child!" said Madam George, bursting into tears, and opening her arms to Fleur de Marie: "You will ever find in my heart the tenderness and devotion of a mother. Courage then, Marie; gain consolation in repentance. You are here surrounded by friends, this house shall be your world; we will face the revelation that you dread. Our good Abbé will assemble together the men of the farm, who already love you so much; he will tell them the truth respecting the past. Believe me, my child, his word is so much respected and possesses such authority, that his revelation will excite a deep and thrilling interest in your behalf."

"I believe you, madam, and I will be resigned. Yesterday in our interview, the curate indicated to me the necessity for most sorrowful expiations; they have commenced! I ought not to be startled at them. He told me further, that on some future day my sufferings would terminate. Sustained under my trials by you and him, I will not complain."

"In a few moments you will see him; on no occasion could his counsels be more salutary to you. It is already quarter past four: prepare yourself, my child, for your visit to the parsonage. I am going to write to Mr. Rodolphe, to acquaint him of what has occurred at the Arnouville farm; my letter will go by express; after which I will join you at our good Abbé's, for he is anxious for a conversation with both of us."

Very shortly afterward, Goualeuse left the farm-house on her way to the parsonage, by the cross-road; where, the evening before, the Schoolmaster and Tortillard had agreed to meet Chouette.

CHAPTER XV. ..... REFLECTIONS.

It will thus be seen, that by the interviews with Madam George and the curate of Bouqueval, Fleur de Marie had nobly profited by the advice of her benefactors; but as she assimilated herself more nearly with their principles, the despair caused by her past degradation ingrafted itself more firmly upon her reflections.

Unhappily, in proportion as these excellent instincts enlarged and multiplied in the midst of the atmosphere of honor and purity in which she lived, her mind became more strongly developed.

With an intelligence less elevated, a sensibility less exquisite, and an imagination less lively, Fleur de Marie would easily have been consoled.

She had repented; a venerable priest had pardoned her. She had forgotten the horrors of the Cité, in the midst of those sweets of rustic life, which she shared with Madam George. She would have surrendered herself, without fear, to the friendship that Madam Dubreuil had extended to her, and that, not from indifference to the faults she had committed, but with a blind confidence in the word of those whose excellence she recognized.

They said to her: 'your conduct has made you worthy of the most elevated and refined society;' and Fleur de Marie was conscious of nothing which should distinguish her from the most virtuous.

The afflicting scene at the Arnouville farm, had painfully affected her; but while shedding bitter tears, and experiencing comparatively feeble remorse at the sight of Clara, sleeping so innocently and purely with the former boarder of the ogress, she could not have anticipated that scene.

Poor girl! in the quiet stillness of her long sleepless nights, how often had she reflected within herself, and indulged in recriminations far more poignant than those which the inhabitants of the farm had heaped upon her.

The analytic, and constant self-examination that she indulged in, and through which she reproached herself, was slowly destroying Fleur-de-Marie; but above all, it was the bitter comparison between the future and the inexorable past, that filled her mind. That future, without this reflection, would have been her dream.

A spirit of analysis, of examination and of comparison, is almost always inherent in a mind of superior intelligence. Among proud and haughty souls this spirit creates doubt, and leads to a revolt against others.

Among timid and delicate souls it creates doubt, and leads to a revolt against one's-self.

The first are condemned, and they absolve themselves; the latter are absolved, and they condemn themselves.

The curate of Bouqueval, notwithstanding his sanctity; Madam George, notwithstanding her virtues; or rather both, on account of their virtues and sanctity, could form no idea of what Goualeuse had suffered since her soul, disengaged from her ignominy, could contemplate the depth of the abyss in which she had been plunged.

They did not know, that the frightful recollections of Goualeuse had almost the power and force of reality. They did not know that this young girl, of an exquisite sensibility, of a dreamy and poetic imagination, of a delicacy of character, arising from her deep susceptibility—they did not know that this young girl never passed a day without recalling to mind, with a feeling of suffering and misery, mingled with disgust and dread, the shameful degradation of her former existence.

Imagine a child of sixteen years, open-hearted and innocent, endowed with conscience, candor, and purity, thrown by some infernal power into the infamous tavern of the ogress, and irreclaimably humbled beneath the cursed influence of such a heartless shrew. For Fleur de Marie, such was the reaction of the past upon the present.

Let us now endeavor to comprehend the kind of retrospective gratitude, or rather the moral reaction, by which Fleur de Marie was so cruelly afflicted; and which caused her to regret, oftener than she dared to confess to the Abbé, that she had not died in that degraded condition.

However little we may reflect, and however trifling our experience in life may be, that which we are about to say may not perhaps be considered as a paradox.

That which rendered Fleur de Marie worthy of interest and pity, was not only that she had never loved, but that her heart had ever remained cold and passionless. When married women—perhaps less delicately endowed than Fleur de Marie—evince a chaste repugnance for a lengthy period after marriage; is it astonishing that this unfortunate creature, scarcely sixteen years of age, intoxicated by the ogress, and thrown in the midst of such a horde of savage and ferocious beasts as infest the Cité, should experience naught but horror and dread, and come forth from this den morally pure?

The undisguised confidence of Clara Dubreuil, as respects her sincere love for the young farmer whom she was about to espouse, had touched Fleur de Marie. She also felt that she could have loved earnestly; that she could have experienced a deep and confiding attachment, in all its excellence, purity, devotion, and warmth. But it was no longer permitted to her to experience, or herself inspire within another, such a passion; for, should she love, the standard of her choice would correspond with the elevation of her own soul; and the more worthy that choice, the more unworthy in contrast would she believe herself to be.

CHAPTER XVI. ..... THE RENCOUNTER.

The sun had disappeared below the horizon, and a deep silence had settled upon the deserted plain.

Fleur de Marie was about entering the cross-road which led to the parsonage, when she saw coming out of the ravine a little lame boy, wearing upon his head a blue cap, and apparently weeping. When he saw Goualeuse at a distance, he ran toward her.

"Oh! my good lady, please have pity on me!" he cried, joining his hands in a supplicating manner.

"What do you wish? what is the matter with you?" said Goualeuse, evincing an interest in him.

"Alas! my good lady, my poor grandmother, who is very old—very old—has fallen down yonder in descending the ravine, and has hurt herself: I am afraid that she has broken her leg. I am too weak to help her up; and if you do not assist me, I do not know what under heaven I shall do. Poor grandmother! perhaps she will die."

Goualeuse, touched by the grief of the little cripple, said:

"My child, I am not very strong myself; but perhaps I may aid you in rendering your grandmother assistance. Let us hurry to her. I live at the farm-house yonder. If the poor old woman cannot accompany us, I will send after her."

"Oh! my good lady, God will surely bless you! It is this way—only a couple of steps on the cross-road, as I told you. It was going down the side-hill that she fell."

"Then you do not belong in the country?" asked Goualeuse while following Tortillard, who, without doubt, had already recognized her.

"No, my good lady; we are from Ecouen."

"And where are you going?"

"We are going to the good curate's, who lives on the hill yonder," said the son of Bras-rouge, to increase the confidence of Fleur de Marie.

"You mean to the Abbé Laporte's, perhaps?"

"Yes, my good lady, to the Abbé Laporte's: my grandmother knows him very well, very well."

"What a coincidence! I am also going there," said Fleur de Marie, while proceeding on the cross-road.

"Grandmother, here I am—here I am. Have patience, I bring you help," said Tortillard, for the purpose of warning the Schoolmaster and Chouette, that they might be ready to seize their victim.

"Is it far from here that your grandmother fell?" asked Goualeuse.

"No, my good lady: behind the large tree yonder, where the road turns, about twenty steps from here."

All at once Tortillard halted.

The sound of a horse galloping, broke upon the silence of the plain.

"All is lost," said Tortillard to himself.

The road made a very abrupt turn, at a short distance from the spot where the son of Bras-rouge and Goualeuse then were.

At this turn a cavalier appeared; when he reached the young girl, he stopped.

The trotting of another horse was then heard; and shortly after a servant came in sight, clad in a brown frock-coat with silver buttons, white buck-skin pantaloons, and top-boots. The mackintosh of his master was strapped behind him, with a narrow belt of pale red color.

The cavalier, dressed plainly in a heavy bronze-colored frock-coat and light-gray pantaloons, sat with remarkable ease and grace, upon a bay horse of superior blood and extraordinary beauty, whose shining coat, notwithstanding the hurried speed he had made, glistened with a golden lustre, untarnished and unobscured by the slightest moisture.

The horse of the groom, checked up suddenly at a few steps from the latter, also exhibited those fine points that characterize the high blood and noble spirit of his race.

In this cavalier of elegant features and dark-brown complexion, Tortillard recognized the Viscount of Saint Remy, the supposed lover of the Duchess of Lucenay.

"My pretty girl," said the Viscount to Goualeuse, whose extreme beauty had struck him; "will you have the kindness to show me the road to the village of Arnouville?"

Marie lowered her eyes before the dark and bold look of the young man, and answered:

"On leaving the cross-road, sir, you will take the first path to the right, which path will conduct you to an avenue of cherry-trees, that leads directly to Arnouville."

"A thousand thanks my beautiful child; you instruct me better than an old woman whom I found a few steps from here, stretched out at the foot of a tree: I could obtain nothing from her but groans."

"My poor grandmother!" murmured Tortillard, in a melancholy voice.

"One more word, if you please," continued the Viscount, addressing Goualeuse; "can you tell me whether at Arnouville I can find, without difficulty, the farm of Madam Dubreuil."

Goualeuse could not avoid starting at these words, which forcibly recalled to her mind the painful scene of the morning. She answered:

"The buildings of the farm line the avenue you are about to take to reach Arnouville, sir."

"My thanks again, my sweet girl," said the Viscount de Saint Remy: and he galloped off, followed by his groom.

The charming features of the Viscount, appeared somewhat warm while he was speaking to Fleur de Marie. The moment he was alone, they became melancholy and subdued under the influence of a deep anxiety.

Fleur de Marie, who remembered the unknown person for whom the pavillion was being prepared in great haste at the Arnouville farm, by the order of Madam de Lucenay, did not doubt but that this young and beautiful cavalier was to be its occupant.

The gallop of the horses resounding upon the frozen ground, continued for some time, but finally abated and ceased.

A deep silence succeeded.

Tortillard began to breathe.

Wishing to tranquillize and caution his accomplices, one of whom—the Schoolmaster—had been deprived of a sight at the horsemen, the son of Bras-rouge cried out:

"Grandmother, here I am, with a good lady who comes to your assistance!"

"Quick—quick, my child: the gentleman on horseback has made us lose some time," said Goualeuse, hurrying to reach the turn of the cross-road.

Scarcely had she arrived there, when Chouette, who was concealed, said in a low voice:

"Here, Fourline!"

Then, springing upon Goualeuse, the old fury seized her by the neck with one hand, and with the other she compressed her lips, while Tortillard, throwing himself at the feet of the young girl, clung to her legs to prevent her from walking.

All this passed so rapidly, that Chouette had not time to examine the features of Goualeuse; but while waiting for the Schoolmaster to crawl out of the hole in which he had been crouching, and whence he was groping his way along with an old cloak in his hand, the old hag had sufficient time to recognize her former victim.

"Pegriotte!" cried she, at first stupefied; and then, adding with ferocious joy, "it is you, then, is it? Ah! it is the *baker* who has sent you to me: it is your lot to fall into my gripe. I've got my vitriol in the coach this time: your pretty phiz must take it. Your virgin look makes me rheumatic. Here, my man, take care of her; but look out that she doesn't bite you. Hold her well while we gag her."

With his two powerful hands, the Schoolmaster seized Goualeuse, and before she could utter a cry, Chouette threw the cloak over her head, and completely enveloped her in it.

In an instant, Fleur de Marie, bound and gagged, was prevented from making the least movement, or calling for aid.

"Now take the bundle, Fourline," said Chouette; "ha, ha, ha! it 's not quite so heavy as the black box of the woman who was drowned in the Saint Martin canal; is it, my man?" and while the brigand was shuddering at these meaning words, which excited a vivid recollection of his frightful dream of the night previous, the unfeeling wretch continued: "Why, what is the matter with you, Fourline? One would think that you shook with cold; for ever since this morning, your teeth have chattered as though you were freezing."

"Big, lazy fellow; he is gaping to catch flies," said Tortillard.

"Come, quick, my man, let us mizzle; bale up Pegriotte. That 's it," added Chouette, on seeing the brigand take up Fleur de Marie in his arms, as easily as he would have raised a sleeping infant. "Quick to the hack, quick!"

"But who is going to lead me?" asked the Schoolmaster, in a rough voice, grasping his light and delicate burden in his herculean arms.

"The old bull-head; he 's wide awake," said Chouette; and unloosing her shawl, she untied a red handkerchief which covered her lean and scraggy neck, twisted it lengthwise, and observed to the Schoolmaster, "Open your trap, and take the end of this handkerchief between your ivories; close them tight. Tortillard will take the other end in his hand, and all you 've got to do is to follow him; a good blind man, and good dog. Here, urchin!"

The little cripple, gamboling forward, and uttering a sort of low and ludicrous yelp, took the other end of the handkerchief, and thus led the Schoolmaster, while Chouette hastened to notify Barbillon.

We shall not attempt to paint the terrifying sensations of Fleur de Marie, when she found herself in the power of Chouette and the Schoolmaster. She was overcome with faintness, and could not offer the least resistance.

In a few moments Goualeuse was conveyed to the hack which was driven by Barbillon; and, although it was dark, the windows of the carriage were carefully closed. The three accomplices now directed their course, in company with their almost expiring victim, toward the plain of Saint Denis, where Tom awaited them.

END OF PART THE THIRD.

PART THE FOURTH.

CHAPTER I. . . . . CLEMENCE D'HARVILLE.

The reader must excuse us, for abandoning one of our heroines in a situation of such peril. We will, in course of time, inform him of the sequel of her adventure. The exigencies of a tale of such complicated incident, and variety of detail, as ours, compel us frequently to shift the scenes, and pass rapidly from one character to another, in order that the narrative may progess, and the interest of the story (if it possess any) be sustained. We shall still be obliged to follow some of the actors we have already introduced, to garrets and other comfortless abodes, where unfortunate beings shudder with cold and hunger, yet sustain their miserable existence by honest and persevering industry, and bear their grievous trials with patient resignation.

We shall still be obliged to visit prisons, where men and women are incarcerated—prisons, some of which are not absolutely without comforts or even luxuries; but the most part of them dark and revolting Pandemoniums—vast schools of crimes whose atmosphere is fetid and corrupt, where innocence may struggle for a season, but must perish eventually; whence those who entered comparatively pure, emerge with minds disciplined in all the rudiments of crime.

We shall have to visit hospitals, in the crowded wards of which the disabled poor are treated with the kindness which their situation demands; but where they are frequently compelled to yearn for a more *secluded* couch, which they could dampen with the cold sweat of fever. In these mysterious asylums, lost innocence gave birth and bathed with her tears, the child of guilt, which she might never again clasp to her bosom. There, are all forms of madness; the stupid, the hideous, the ferocious, varying the horrible grotesque of the most frightful calamity, that can visit a human being; the fanatic, who fancies himself a god, by the side of the fanatic, who thinks himself a devil; the implacable maniac, who grasps with his teeth the iron bars of his cell, by the side of the enthusiast, whose countenance is placid with the joys of an imaginary heaven, or by the side of some peaceful idiot, whose sad laugh draws tears from the eye.

We shall have finally to explore——; but why this prolonged enumeration? We fear we may alarm the reader; he has already accompanied us to most strange and frightful abodes; perhaps he will not hesitate to follow us in the peregrinations which remain.

We are now prepared to proceed.

The reader will remember, that the day preceding the events which we have just narrated, the Duke of Gerolstein had rescued the Marchioness d'Harville from a most perilous encounter, a peril into which she had been led by the jealousy and the arts of Sarah, Countess McGregor. Rodolphe was deeply affected by the scene in which he had been so prominent an actor. He left rue du Temple, with a mind sad and contemplative; and concluded to postpone, until the next day, his interview with Mademoiselle Rigolette, and also to the poverty-stricken family of the Morels, whom he supposed were raised above the pressure of urgent want by the assistance of the purse which he had placed in the hands of the Marchioness d'Harville, to render her pretended visit of charity more plausible in the eyes of the Marquis. In the hurry of the scene, and in the tumult of his feelings, Rodolphe had forgotten that he had afterward seen the purse in the hands of Tortillard, who had snatched it from the Marchioness, and escaped with it from the house.

About four o'clock in the afternoon, the Prince received the following note. An aged female had left it at his door, and departed without waiting for a reply.

"My Lord,

"I am indebted to you for more than my life. I wish to express to you this very day my overwhelming gratitude. By to-morrow, perhaps shame and confusion might close my lips. If you would honor me with a call this evening, you would conclude the day—as you began it, my lord—by a generous action.

"D'Orbigny d'Harville.

"P. S. Do not give yourself the trouble to respond to this note, my lord, for I shall be at home during the entire evening."

Rodolphe, happy in having rendered the Marchioness a service of so much importance, nevertheless, regretted the forced and embarrassed confidence which it would establish between them. The delicacy of Rodolphe's friendship for the Marquis was so fastidious, that after enjoying for about a month the intellectual accomplishments, and enchanting beauty of Clemence, he had voluntarily relinquished her society, which he found daily growing more dangerously attractive. The conversation which he had overheard between the Countess McGregor and her brother, had informed him of the interest which he had inspired in the Marchioness's bosom. This woman, in order to show some pretext for her hatred and jealousy, had affirmed that the Marchioness, unconsciously, had been inspired with a deep affection for himself; and thoroughly initiated into all the windings of the female heart, the perfidious Countess had addressed her temptation to Clemence, when she believed herself neglected and slighted by the man in whom her heart was interested; believing, that out of spite she would then yield to the imaginary excellence and heart-rending melancholy of Mr. Charles Robert. But the Countess was also convinced, that the attachment of the Marchioness to Rodolphe would survive the illusion in which the Commander, with her own assistance, had contrived to involve the heart of Clemence. Other females, faithful to the memory of the man whom they had distinguished with their regard, would have probably remained indifferent to the sighs of the melancholy Antinous; but yielding to her compassion, by granting the Commander an interview, the Marchioness was doubly culpable, for she had neither been restrained by her conjugal obligations, nor the appealing voice of a tenderer sentiment. Rodolphe, while meditating upon the interview which the Marchioness had solicited, was assailed by the most discordant emotions, by the most contradictory determinations. He had decided, in his own mind, to resist the dangerous inclination which drew him toward the Countess; and, at times, esteemed himself happy in being able to banish her image from his mind, by recalling the weakness which had yielded to the temptations of the Countess, and the simulated despondency of Mr. Charles Robert; at other times, he regretted that the tenderness which he had inspired in the bosom of the Marchioness, and the delightful dream of beauty and perfection in which his own senses were wrapt, should ever be dispelled.

Clemence d'Harville anticipated the visit of the Prince with great anxiety. She was tortured with the most mortifying self-reproach, when she thought of Rodolphe; with the most intense aversion and contempt, when her mind reverted to the Commander. A female will sacrifice her honor and her repose to a man, without losing her affection for him; but she will never forgive him, who subjects her to a humiliating and ridiculous exposure. The sarcasms and insults of Madam Pipelet, would never be effaced from the Marchioness's mind. She had also caught a glimpse of the Commander, when he appeared at his own door, armed for conquest, in his magnificent robe and embroidered cap. His smile of complacency; his self-satisfied countenance, expressing unlimited confidence in his irresistible powers of fascination; the impertinent foppery of his costume; were fatal to all the interest which he had previously inspired, and revealed to her mind, at one glance, the ridiculous and contemptible traits of her admirer's character. To this vain and conceited pretender; to this coxcomb, whose egregious vanity was only equalled by his unsurpassed insolence; she had been duped, by her generosity and commiseration for the humiliating position in which the Duke de Lucenay had involved him, to grant an interview, rather of condolence than of love—a condescension, however, which hazarded her own repose and the happiness of her husband. Let the reader imagine the disgust and contempt of the Marchioness, when Mr. Charles Robert—the suicidal swain—appeared decked in all the trappings of anticipated victory.

Nine o'clock had just rung from the pendule in the small saloon, which the Marchioness habitually occupied. The restorateurs and haberdashers, have so caricatured the style of Louis XV., and of the Restoration, that a lady of supreme elegance, like the Marchioness, had banished from her private saloon all that kind of decoration which has become general, and of course, vulgar. Nothing could be more exquisite, and *distingué*, than the furniture of the small parlor in which the Marchioness awaited the arrival of Rodolphe. The hangings and curtains, without ornament or drapery, were of straw-colored silk damask, embroidered with fantastical arabesque figures, in raw silk; veils of double lace, entirely concealed the glass of the windows. The doors were of rose-wood, each tympan held a medalion of Sevres porcelain, representing birds and flowers, of admirable execution and finish, encircled by a delicate silver moulding. The white mantel, with its supporting columns, owed its classic grace and extreme beauty to the masterly chisel of Marochetti—that eminent artist having condescended to employ his genius upon this precious chef d' œuvre, remembering probably, that even Benvenuto did not disdain to design models for vases and arms. Two candelabras and two candlesticks of massive silver, the unrivalled workmanship of Gouttiere, stood by the side of the pendule. The clock, a solid block of lapis-lazuli, stood on a pedestal of oriental jasper, and was surmounted by a large enamelled cup of gold, inlaid with pearls and rubies; a gem of art which belonged to the best epoch of the revival of the Florentine school. Several paintings by Venetian masters, completed this costly collection of supreme taste and magnificence.

Thanks to a daring innovation of the charming Marchioness, this retreat of elegance and taste owed its soft and mellowed light to a crystal globe, hid in a large bouquet of natural flowers. This fairy lamp was held in a blue Japan vase, embossed with purple and gold figures, which hung from the ceiling. To the three chains of silver which supported them, clung a variety of creeping plants, whose flexible tendrils, loaded with flowers, fell back over the cup like a fringe of verdure, or like an enamel of azure and gold. We have been particular in these details, in order to give an idea of the taste and refinement of her who had embellished the sanctuary to which she retired, from a society of which she was the ornament and the envy; and because a being who, to the careless eye, was surrounded by all that constitutes an existence of unalloyed happiness, was not protected by it from the penetrating fang of misfortune and grief. Sunk in a large fauteuil, entirely covered by silk-damask, which matched with the hangings; the Marchioness wore a dress of black velvet, with a broad collar of rarest work, and cuffs of English lace, that the dazzling whiteness of her complexion might not contrast too strongly with the dark material. It may be said, that the emotion of the Marchioness increased, as the hour of her interview with Rodolphe drew near; but the confusion with which she was at first assailed, gave place to more resolute thoughts. After mature reflection, she determined to disclose the cause of her sorrow, the secret of which she had thus far preserved in inviolable confidence, hoping that her extreme frankness might secure an esteem, which she valued so highly, and which she feared was for ever alienated. Her former attachment to Rodolphe, quickened by her lively gratitude, revived with more than its pristine power. One of those presentiments which seldom deceive loving hearts, suggested to her that some higher mediation than chance, had sent the Prince to her rescue. It occurred to her, that some other sentiment than aversion to her society, might be the cause of his unfrequent visits. A vague suspicion of the sincerity of the Countess, mingled with a variety of other thoughts to which recent occurrences had given birth.

In a few moments a foot-boy, having first rapped at the door, entered and said:

"Will the Marchioness receive a visit from Madam Anthon and Mademoiselle?"

"Certainly; as I am always prepared to do," said the Marchioness; and her daughter slowly entered the parlor.

She was a child of four years old, and might have been considered pretty, were it not for her extreme paleness and unhealthy expression. Madam Anthon, the governess, held her by the hand. Claire, (such was the child's name,) in spite of her feeble state, hastened toward her mother, stretching out her little arms. Her hair was parted at her forehead, and the delicacy of her health was such, that she was dressed in a wadded silk, instead of one of those pretty slips of white muslin, which display the rosy little arms and smooth shoulders of healthy children. So thin were her cheeks, that the full black eyes of the child seemed unnaturally large; but a smile, beaming with love and gentleness, lit her pallid face as she was placed on her mother's lap, who embraced her with the most affectionate, but pitying tenderness.

"How has she been this afternoon?" asked the Marchioness, of the governess.

"Pretty well, my lady; although I feared for a moment ——"

"What! again?" exclaimed Clemence, pressing the child to her bosom with an involuntary movement of tenderness.

"I was fortunately mistaken," said the governess; "Mademoiselle became calm, she only experienced a slight faintness; she has slept but little this afternoon, but she would not go to bed for the night without kissing her mother."

"Poor little beloved!" said the Marchioness, caressing the child. While the mother was indulging in these expressions of tenderness, the servant threw open the door and announced, "His Serene Highness, my Lord, the Grand Duke of Gerolstein."

The arms of little Claire were thrown around her mother's neck, as Rodolphe entered. The Marchioness blushed at the sight of the Prince, placed her daughter gently on the floor, made a signal to Madam Anthon to leave the room with her charge, and rose to welcome the Grand Duke.

"You will permit me, Marchioness," said Rodolphe smiling, after having frequently bowed to her ladyship; "to renew my acquaintance with my little friend, whom I fear has forgotten me;" and bending low, he gave his hand to the child.

The child at first turned her large black eyes—unrecognizing—upon him; but a smile began soon slowly to steal over her features; she bowed her little head, and blew him a kiss with her fingers.

"Do you not know the Duke, my child?" asked her mother.

The little fairy bowed her head, and wafted another kiss to Rodolphe.

"Her health seems to have improved since I last saw her," said the Prince, addressing Clemence.

"My lord, she is somewhat better, but still suffers much."

The Marchioness and Rodolphe, both equally embarrassed in anticipation of their proposed conversation, were happy to have it postponed for a few moments by the presence of the child. The governess and her charge, however, soon disappeared, and Clemence and the Prince were left alone.

CHAPTER II. THE CONFESSION.

The fauteuil of the Marchioness was placed at the right of the fireplace, near which Rodolphe was standing, leaning lightly upon the mantel. Never, before, had Clemence been so impressed with the noble and intellectual countenance of the Prince; never before had his voice sounded to her so sweet and melodious. So much how painful it would be for the Marchioness to open the conversation, Rodolphe said to her:

"You have been, Marchioness, the victim of a base treachery: the perfidious friendship of the Countess McGregor, came very near accomplishing your ruin."

"Can it be possible!" replied the lady; "my presentiments then have not deceived me. But how did your Highness obtain the information which led you to my rescue?"

"I discovered her criminal duplicity quite accidentally, last

evening, at the Countess of * * *'s ball. I was seated in a secluded part of the winter-garden, behind a thick growth of shrubbery. The Countess Sarah and her brother had sought the same place, for the purpose of maturing their infamous plan of exposing you to the anger of your husband. My fortuitous position concealed me from their view, while it enabled me to hear distinctly everything they said. Anxious to inform you of the danger which threatened, I sought you at the ball of the Baroness de Nervil, but I could not find you. To write to you a letter this morning, was to expose it to the hazard of falling into your husband's hands, whose suspicions had been already awakened. I determined, therefore, to wait for you at the rue du Temple, to counteract, if possible, the treacherous stratagem of the Countess. You will forgive me, I trust, for speaking so long upon a subject which cannot but be disagreeable to you. Had it not been for the letter with which you have honored me, my lips would have been for ever closed upon the subject."

After a moment's silence, the Marchioness d'Harville said to the Grand Duke:

"I have but one way, my lord, of proving to you my gratitude. It is by making to you a confession which I have never before made to a human being—a confession which, if it does not restore me to your esteem, will, I hope, moderate your disapprobation of my conduct."

"Truly, Marchioness," said Rodolphe, smiling, "I feel that my relation to you is not entirely free from embarrassment."

Clemence, astonished at the apparent lenity of his tone, looked at the Prince with a glance of surprise, and said:

"What do you mean, my lord?"

"Owing to a circumstance which you will perhaps divine, I am obliged to play the part of a father. As concerns the snare of the Countess which you have escaped, it does not merit the serious thoughts which you bestow upon it; but," added Rodolphe, with affectionate gravity, "your husband is my bosom friend—almost my brother. My affection for him is moreover hereditary, for my father vowed to his, eternal gratitude. I, then, most sincerely felicitate you for having restored to your husband repose and confidence."

"It is for that reason, my lord—it is because you honor the Marquis with your friendship, that I have the heart to reveal to you the entire truth; both as to the selection which I made—unfortunate as the choice may appear to you, and really is—and as to my husband, whom your Highness has condescended to call brother."

"I shall ever feel most happy and proud, Marchioness, of the slightest proof of your confidence; but allow me to say, in regard to the *choice* to which you allude, that I am already aware, that you have yielded as much to a sentiment of sincere compassion, as to the artful and mendacious suggestions of the Countess McGregor. I know, too, that you for a long time hesitated before you determined upon the step, which I am confident you must look upon now with sincere regret."

Clemence turned toward the Prince with amazement.

"Your ladyship is surprised; but I will disclose to you my secret at some other time, so that you need not fear me as a sorcerer," continued Rodolphe, smiling: "but is your husband completely reassured?"

"Yes, my lord," said Clemence, casting down her eyes in embarrassment; "and I confess to you, that his solicitations for my forgiveness, and his applause of what he terms my unostentatious charity, are exceedingly painful to me."

"The illusion is a happy one; do not reject his compliments, or dispel an error which is so agreeable. If I were permitted, Marchioness, to speak lightly of this adventure, and if it were any other person but yourself that it concerned, I should say, that a wife never appears so charming to her husband as when she has some little fault to dissimulate; people have no idea of all the fond caresses which a bad conscience can suggest, of all the flowers which spring up to conceal a deceit. When I was *young*," said Rodolphe, "I was always rather suspicious of certain excesses of tenderness; and as I was conscious myself, that I never put forth more exertions to please, than when I have some reason to solicit forgiveness; I was convinced, that when other people behaved so perfidiously amiable toward me, that they had also some ill-conduct to conceal."

The Marchioness was more and more astonished, to hear the Prince speak so lightly of an indiscretion which might have been attended with fatal results; but soon imagining that Rodolphe affected this levity for the purpose of diminishing the importance of the services which he had rendered, she said to him, deeply touched by his delicacy:

"I fully appreciate your generosity, my lord. It is allowed you to jest at dangers, from which I have been rescued by your kindness; but what I have myself to disclose is so serious, so sorrowful, so closely related to the events of the morning; and your advice may be so essential to me, that I beg of your Highness to remember, that you have saved my life and my honor. I repeat, my life, my lord; for in the excess of his remorse my husband confessed to me that he was armed: his intention was to kill me."

"Good Heaven!" said Rodolphe, with a shudder that he could not conceal.

"He had a full right to do so, my lord."*

"I assure you, Marchioness," said Rodolphe, in a very serious tone, "that I am incapable of manifesting indifference to anything which concerns you. If I have shown any levity, it was because I did not wish to increase the sadness with which the events of the morning cannot have failed to inspire you. Now I listen to your ladyship with attention, since you have been so kind as to inform me that my advice may be of service."

"It may determine the character of my whole future life; but before soliciting it, allow me, my lord, to allude to my past history, which is unknown to you; and to speak of the years which preceded my marriage with the Marquis."

Rodolphe bowed to Clemence, who continued:

"I had the misfortune," said she, "at the age of sixteen, to lose my mother,"—and a slight moisture rendered more melting her beautiful eye. "I will not attempt to inform you how much I adored her. She was all that the most refined imagination and the purest heart can conceive that a mother should be; and her love for me was the sole consolation of a life of unrelieved sickness and sorrow, to which all the charms of society and the refinements of culture and taste could administer no relief. Her sole pleasure was the exclusive charge of my education, for which her exalted moral attributes, and her solid and varied acquirements, eminently fitted her. Judge, my lord, of her astonishment and my own, when, at the age of sixteen, the time that my education was almost completed, under the pretence that my mother's health was too delicate for such application; my father announced that a young widow of a fashionable reputation, and rendered interesting by great misfortunes, was to complete what my mother had commenced. She would not at first yield to my father's peremptory inclination. As for myself, I implored him not to bring a stranger between me and my mother: but he was inexorable to my entreaties and tears. Madam Roland, (according to her own account,) the widow of a Colonel who had perished in India, came to reside at our mansion, and discharge toward myself the functions of instructress."

"Is it the same Madam Roland whom your father married shortly after your own nuptials?"

"The same, my lord."

"Was she not beautiful?"

"Passably, my lord."

"Exceedingly accomplished?"

"Dissimulation and cunning were her sole accomplishments. She was twenty-five years of age; with very light hair, and eyebrows that were almost white; and large round eyes, of light-blue. Her expression was modest and demure; and her disposition, perfidiously cruel, appeared abjectly humble."

"And her instruction?"

"She gave me none, my lord; and I never have been able to understand why my father, a slave to propriety, and ordinarily of sufficient shrewdness, had not sagacity enough to foresee that the total incapacity of the woman he had selected as the instructress of his daughter, would glaringly expose the real nature of his relation to Madam Roland. My mother remarked to him, that my preceptress was very ignorant. But he informed her, in a manner that admitted of no response, that, ignorant or not, the interesting widow would continue to occupy the situation in which he had placed her. I am convinced that, from that moment, my mother realized the entire truth; for it was the commencement of still deeper sorrow. She deplored less the infidelity of my father, than the domestic inquietudes which such a *liaison* would constantly excite, and the influence of the scandal upon my young mind."

"Considering his foolish partiality for the lady, it seems to me that the introduction of her into his own house, was a very injudicious step on the part of your father."

"Your astonishment will increase, when you become aware that my father was a man of severe and formal morality; and nothing, but the excessive influence of Madam Roland, could ever have made him forgetful of propriety—an influence which was more owing to the extraordinary partiality which she affected for him."

* Such is the privilege, the translator understands, which the laws of France grant to an outraged husband.

"What was your father's age at this time?"

"Nearly sixty years."

"And could he be deceived by the affected raptures of the young woman?"

"My father had been one of the most fashionable men of his time; and Madam Roland, in obedience to an artful instinct, or to a sagacious adviser——"

"Adviser! who was he?"

"I will soon inform you, my lord. Aware that a man who had been once distinguished for his conquests, is, when advanced in years, very accessible to flatteries addressed to his personal vanity, since they forcibly recall his former triumphs to his mind; Madam Roland complimented my father upon the grace and distinction of his personal appearance, eulogizing the beauty of face and statuesque proportions of his figure, offering these exaggerated tributes to a man of three-score years. Notwithstanding he had a mind of acute penetration and high intelligence, he fell blind-folded into this palpable snare. Such has been, and such I doubt not still is, the secret of that woman's influence over him. Indeed, my lord, in spite of the gloomy thoughts which preoccupy my mind, I cannot but smile at the remembrance of one of Madam Roland's conciliatory observations. I once heard her maintain, in presence of my father, that what she termed real maturity was the most interesting period of life; and that she did not think that the perfection of the mental and physical charms *commenced* until fifty-five or sixty years of age."

"The exact age of your father!"

"Certainly, my lord. 'Then only,' said Madam Roland, 'have the powers of observation and reflection attained their final development; then only, a man occupying a distinguished position in society, enjoys all the consideration to which he can rationally pretend. At that period of life, the countenance has acquired its highest power of expression—that rare combination, gracious serenity and mild gravity; the form, its most perfect symmetry, and the manners, their final polish: in short, an interesting melancholy, which the disappointments of three-score years of experience alone can produce, completes the irresistible charm of real maturity—a charm,' said Madam Roland, 'only appreciable by a woman of talent and heart, who has the boldness and the taste to despise the fluttering of young fops of forty, on whose unformed characters one cannot rely with security, and whose childish features are not yet rendered poetical by that majestic expression which a perfect knowledge of life can alone afford.'"

Rodolphe could not restrain a smile at the ironical tone with which the Marchioness described the honeyed *placeboes* which her stepmother administered to her father's vanity.

"There is one thing," said he, "which I can never pardon in ridiculous people."

"What is it, my lord?"

"Malice; for it prevents me from laughing at them with unrestrained merriment."

"Perhaps some have sense enough intentionally to display some hateful points of character, in order to save themselves from being ludicrous."

"I believe it; and it is a serious calamity. For instance, if I could forget the injuries which Madam Roland has inflicted upon you, I should enjoy with unalloyed laughter her description of real maturity, contrasted with the wild excesses of roistering fops of forty, whom she paints as hardly emerged from the bibs and leading-strings of infancy."

"I hope, at least, that my father is happy in these illusions, which his wife has so much skill in creating."

"She is doubtless at this moment punished for her falsehoods and for her affectation of love. Your father took her at her word; he lavishes upon her his love, and seems to think that the company of a man of 'real maturity,' will compensate a 'woman of talent and of heart,' for all the charms of miscellaneous society from which she is secluded. She must be as miserable as your father is happy. Imagine the extravagant joy of a man of sixty, accustomed to conquest, who finds that sufficient charms will survive to fascinate a young woman so much his junior, to such a degree as to make her contented with a solitude only relieved by his society."

"Therefore, my lord, if my father finds himself happy, I do not know what reason I have to complain against Madam Roland, except for her outrageous conduct to my mother, and her active agency in facilitating my marriage," said the Marchioness, with perceptible embarrassment.

It was now Rodolphe's turn to be surprised.

"The Marquis d'Harville is your friend, my lord," continued Clemence, in a firm voice; "and I am aware of the full import of the words which I have spoken. You will soon have an opportunity of judging whether I am justified in using them; but at present, I will return to Madam Roland. I have said that she was established as my instructress in spite of her well known incapacity. Upon this subject, my mother had a painful explanation with my father, and told him that, intending to protect herself by every justifiable means against the gross insult which was offered to herself by that woman's presence in the house, she would no longer make her appearance at table, unless Madam Roland was dismissed. My mother was goodness itself, and, on ordinary occasions, the mildest of human beings; but she was capable of indomitable firmness when her dignity was outraged. My father was of course inflexible; but his wife kept her word, and from that time we lived entirely secluded in our own apartments. I was treated with the same coldness and incivility with which my mother was. Madam received visits, sat at the head of the table, and, almost ostentatiously, performed the honors of the house; always, however, in the character of my instructress."

"In what absurdities," said Rodolphe, "will not a foolish passion involve a sensible mind! We are always more pleased with praise for qualities which we do not possess, or of whose existence we are doubtful, until assured thereof by the confident voice of adulation; than by tributes offered to those kinds of superiority with which we are conscious of being endowed. Madam Roland, it seems to me, was a very skillful adept. To prove to a man of sixty that he was only thirty, was an idea which would never have occurred but to a bold and adroit sycophant. The more gross the flattery, the more successful it is. We who are privileged to reign," said the Prince, with a slight irony of tone, "are well aware of that."

"You must have had many experiments made upon you, my lord."

"Your father has been fed with royal food. I thought that such ingenious and extravagant compliments to pride of person, was a luxury reserved for kings alone. But your mother; she must have suffered much."

"She suffered more on my account, than her own; and contemplated with melancholy foreboding, my situation when she should be removed from the world. Her health, always delicate, now entirely failed; she was attacked by an alarming indisposition. Unfortunately our family physician, Mr. Sorbier, in whom my mother had unlimited confidence, had recently died. Madam Roland had for her medical attendant and confidential friend, an Italian physician of great reputation, as she said; and whom my father, prejudiced in his favor by the eulogies of the interesting widow, had frequently consulted, and suggested that my mother should also employ. She followed his advice, and the Italian attended my mother during her last illness." The eyes of the Marchioness were now suffused with tears.

"I am ashamed of my weakness," continued she; "yet, from the circumstance that this physician was introduced into the family under the auspices of Madam Roland, I felt for him an unconquerable repugnance. I saw with great regret my mother yield him her confidence; and yet, in point of medical skill and learning, Dr. Polidori——"

"Whom do you name, Marchioness?"

"What affects you, my lord?" exclaimed Clemence, startled at the unnatural expression of Rodolphe's face.

"But no! no!" said the Prince to himself; "it cannot be: these events must have happened five or six years since; and I have been told that Polidori has only been in Paris for about two years under a fictitious name. I am confident that the charlatan Cesar Braghmanti and the Abbé are identical; yet there cannot be two physicians of that name." What a singular coincidence! a few words about this Polidori," said Rodolphe to the Marchioness, who had been looking at him with increasing surprise; "what was the age of that physician?"

"About fifty."

"And his face? his expression?"

"Sinister and forbidding. I never can forget his clear green eyes, and his nose, hooked like an eagle's bill."

"It is he! it is he!" exclaimed Rodolphe.

CHAPTER III. ..... RECITAL CONTINUED

"And do you believe, Marchioness, that Dr. Polidori still resides in Paris?" asked Rodolphe of the Marchioness.

"I know not, my lord. About a year after my father's marriage, he left Paris. A lady of my acquaintance, whose medical attendant was with the Italian at this time, was the Duchess de Lucenay—— Yes, my lord; why that surprise?"

"Allow me to be silent as to the cause. But what did the Duchess say about the man?"

* The reader has not forgotten that Polidori, at the time he took charge of Rodolphe's education, was a distinguished physician.

"That she often received very interesting letters from him, respecting the countries which he visited, for he was a great traveller. Now you have called it to my memory, I recollect that about a month since, I asked the Duchess if she still continued to receive letters from Doctor Polidori? She replied to me with an embarrassment that excited my attention, that it was a long time since she had heard from him, that nobody knew where he was, and that some people believed him dead."

"It is very singular," said Rodolphe, recalling to mind the visit of the Duchess to the quack Bradamanti.

"Do you know this physician, my lord?"

"To my sorrow," exclaimed the Grand Duke; "but I beg of you to proceed with your narrative. I will inform you at some other time respecting this Polidori."

"The physician?"

"Say rather the wretch, blackened with awful crimes."

"Crimes!" exclaimed the Marchioness, with affright. "Has he ever been guilty of anything which deserves that name? The friend of Madam Roland and my mother's physician? My mother expired under his treatment, after a few days of sickness! You alarm me, my lord. You disclose too much or not enough."

"Without accusing the man of any new crime, without charging your step-mother with being an accomplice, I say that you ought to be grateful to Providence that your father, after his marriage with Madam Roland, dispensed with the services of a man whom, upon my honor, I believe capable of anything."

"Just Heaven!" exclaimed the Marchioness; "my presentiments then, have not deceived me."

"Your presentiments?"

"Yes: I spoke to you of the repugnance which the physician inspired, because he had been introduced by Madam Roland, but I did not disclose all my suspicions, my lord."

"Why so?"

"I feared to accuse an innocent person without stronger evidence than I possessed. But I will now tell you everything, my lord: The illness of my mother lasted five days, and I remained with her continually. One evening, fatigued with my exertions and uninterrupted attendance, I went out for a few moments to breathe the air on the terrace. After a quarter of an hour, as I was returning through a long and dark passage which leads to my mother's chamber, by the feeble light which issued from Madam Roland's apartment, I saw Polidori leaving it. The woman followed him. I was in the dark and unperceived. Madam Roland spoke to him in a very low voice, some words which I could not hear—the physician replied in a louder tone, these words only—'*day after to-morrow*;' and as Madam Roland still continued to address him in whispers, he replied with a strange accent—'day after to-morrow, I tell you; day after to-morrow.'"

"What did these mysterious words import?"

"On Wednesday night, the physician, Polidori, said, '*the day after to-morrow*;' on Friday my mother was dead!"

"It is, indeed, a frightful suspicion!"

"When my power of reflection returned, these words, which predicted with such certainty my mother's death, haunted my thoughts. I suppose that the physician, Polidori, informed by his professional knowledge of the short time my mother had to live, had hastened to inform Madam Roland of the event, who had so many reasons for desiring her death. That alone was sufficient to inspire me with horror for both of them; but never did I suspect the frightful intimation which is now suggested. Oh! no, no! I cannot admit the awful suspicion to have a place in my mind!"

"Was Polidori the only physician who attended your mother?"

"The day before her death, Polidori called in consultation one of his brother doctors. From what my father afterward told me, this adviser found my mother in a very alarming condition. After I lost my mother, I was taken to one of my relations, who had been tenderly attached to her. Forgetting the reserve which was due to my age, she disclosed to me, in plain terms, the just cause I had of indignation against Madam Roland, and the ambitious pretensions which the woman from this time had good reasons for enforcing. The disclosure overpowered me: I saw at one glance the sufferings which my mother must have endured. My heart was broken! When I saw my father again, he came to take me with him into Normandy: we were to spend there the first months of our mourning. During the journey, he wept frequently. He told me, that I was the only one who could sustain him under this terrible affliction. I replied, moved by his tenderness, that he was my sole dependence since the death of the most beloved of mothers. After a few words, in which he expressed his regrets at the necessity of leaving me so frequently alone, during the absences which his business would require; he informed me, without any transition, and as the most natural thing in the world, that fortunately for himself and me, Madam Roland had consented to preside over his mansion, and to become my guide and friend. Surprise, pain, and indignation rendered me mute. I wept silently: my father asked me the cause of my tears. I exclaimed, probably with too much bitterness, that I never would live in the house with Madam Roland; for I despised the woman as much as I hated her, on account of the sufferings which she had caused my mother. He remained calm; reproved what he called my childishness; and told me firmly that his resolution was unchangeable, and that I would be compelled to submit. I begged him to permit me to retire to the Sacred Heart, where I had a number of friends, and that I might be permitted to remain there until the time arrived when he judged it would be proper for me to marry. He observed to me, that the time had passed by when nuptials were celebrated at the grated door of a convent; that my eagerness to desert him would be very distressing to him, if he did not observe in it a pardonable egotism; that my feelings would soon become calmer; and he kissed my forehead and called me his obstinate pet. Alas! I was forced to submit. Judge, my lord, what must have been my feelings, to be compelled to anticipate familiar intercourse with the woman whom I almost reproached as the cause of my mother's death. I foresaw the constant recurrence of the most distressing scenes between me and my father; for I determined that no influence or consideration should ever induce me to disguise my aversion to Madam Roland. I thought that the slightest civility which I should tender that woman, would be disrespectful to my mother's memory; and the least throb of affection sacrilegious."

"How painful your existence must have been. The suspicion never crossed my mind, that you were exposed to so much suffering, when I had the pleasure of seeing you more frequently than at present. Not a word fell from your lips, which awakened any doubt of your complete felicity."

"It was because, at that time, my lord, I had no unpardonable weakness to excuse. I have given you these details of my early life, that you may understand, my lord, in what manner I was situated at the time of my marriage; and why, in spite of warnings which I ought to have regarded, I married the Marquis d'Harville. Upon our arrival at Anbers—the name of my father's estate—the first individual who greeted us was Madam Roland, who had gone to establish herself there on the day of my mother's death. The humble and subdued manner but imperfectly disguised the triumphant joy of her countenance. I never shall forget the glance of mingled irony and malice which she cast upon me as I alighted. It seemed to say, 'I am at home here: you are a stranger.' A new sorrow awaited me; either through an unpardonable want of tact, or from daring impudence, the woman occupied the very apartments of my mother. Indignant at the outrage, I uttered loud complaints to my father. He replied to me with severity, that so far from exciting my anger, it should teach me to regard Madam Roland as my second mother. I told him that I never would profane a sacred name. At the risk of offending my father, I improved every occasion to manifest my detestation of Madam Roland. He lost his temper, and reprimanded me harshly, in presence of the woman. He reproached me with ingratitude to God, for exhibiting unkindness to a being whom He had sent to us as an angel of consolation."

"I begged my father to speak for himself alone. He replied with the most cruel and reproachful words. The honeyed voice of Madam Roland was raised in my favor. 'I entreat of you to be indulgent to Clemence,' said she. 'Her affliction for the loss of the excellent person whom we all deplore, is so natural and praiseworthy, that we should pardon and pity even the intemperance of her sorrow.' 'Do you hear her?' said my father, looking at Madam Roland with admiration. 'Is she not good enough—generous enough? Your only response should be, to throw yourself into her arms.'"

"'It is useless, father. Madam Roland hates me, and I reciprocate her emotions.' 'Ah, Clemence! you wound my feelings cruelly; but I forgive you,' said the 'angel of consolation,' raising her eyes to heaven. 'My friend, my generous and noble friend, be calm I beg of you,' said my father. 'For my sake, pardon a foolish girl, who is only to be pitied for not appreciating your excellence.' Then, looking at me with great indignation, he continued; 'If you dare to insult this lady, for whom I have the highest esteem, you will merit the severest punishment in the power of a father to inflict. Ask her forgiveness, instantly.' 'My mother sees and hears me,' said I. 'She never would forgive such an insult to her memory;' and I left the room, while my father was engaged in administering consolation to Madam Roland, and wiping away her tears. I beg your pardon, my

lord, for dwelling with so much particularity upon this family scene, for it is only by such descriptions that I can give you any idea of my domestic infelicity."

"Methinks I am present at the scene which you depict with such sad, but truthful coloring. How many families are disturbed, and always will be, by similar inquietudes. Nothing is more common, and yet nothing can be more adroit, than the conduct of Madam Roland. That affectation of injured innocence in the midst of her perfidy, is within the power of an actor of the meanest capacity, and yet the highest ability could invent nothing better adapted to promote the end in view. After all, the effect was not so much attributable to the art of Madam Roland, as to the weakness of your father. But how did this intrusion of the admirer of 'real maturity' affect the neighborhood?"

"She was received as my instructress and friend."

"I need not ask whether your father lived in retirement."

"Except a few visits of necessity and business, we received no company. My father, absolutely surrendered to his passion for Madam Roland, and probably induced by her entreaties, threw off his weeds before three months had expired since the death of my mother, under the pretext, that the real badge of mourning was worn on the heart. His coldness increased toward me daily; his indifference to me was so great, that I was allowed a freedom unusual to young ladies of my age. I never saw my father but at breakfast; after that meal, he retired to his study with Madam Roland, who officiated as his secretary in all his business correspondence; after which he took the air with her, either in his carriage or on foot, and only returned at the dinner-hour. He received those persons with whom he could not avoid an interview; played backgammon until ten with Madam Roland, when he offered her his arm, conducted her to my mother's apartment, kissed her hand respectfully, and leaving her, retired for the night. As for myself, I could dispose of the day as I pleased: ride on horseback, accompanied by a servant, or take long walks in the woods which surrounded the château. Sometimes, overwhelmed with sadness, I could not appear at the breakfast-table; but my father took no notice of it."

"What singular forgetfulness and indifference."

"Having several times met with one of our neighbors, who visited, like myself, the woods, I gave up my walks there and confined myself to the park."

"But what was this woman's conduct to you, when you were alone in her society?"

"Each of us avoided these contests as much as possible. One day, alluding to some reproachful words which I had dropped the preceding evening, she said, 'Be careful, Mademoiselle, how you strive with me; it is you who will be shattered.' 'As my mother was,' said I; 'it is a pity that Doctor Polidori is not present, to inform me that the event will happen the *day after to-morrow*.' The words produced a strong impression upon Madam Roland, but she soon recovered her composure. I know now, thanks to you, my lord, who this Polidori is, and of what crimes he is capable. The terror which Madam Roland evinced on hearing these significant words, may perhaps confirm the vague doubts which the mysterious circumstances, under which they were repeated, have excited. I tremble to think, that my father is at present exposed to a woman, whom I know has no conscience to restrain her, and to her accomplice, who will halt at no crime."

"What answer did your stepmother make, when you recalled to her the words of Polidori?"

"She at first blushed; but soon subduing her emotion, said to me, in a tone of indifference, 'What do you mean, Mademoiselle?' 'Interrogate yourself when you are alone,' said I, 'and you will perhaps be furnished with an answer.' But a few days afterward, however, a scene occurred which determined my future position. A portrait of my mother, was one of quite a number of family pictures, which adorned the saloon where we met in the evening. On the day of which I speak, two of our neighbors, one a notary by the name of Dorval, who entertained for my mother the profoundest veneration, were dining at our house. 'What has become of my mother's portrait?' said I to my father, as I entered the room. 'The sight of it was too painful to me,' said he, with a glance which intimated that there were strangers in the saloon. 'But to where has it been removed, my father?' said I. He turned toward Madam Roland, and questioning her with a look and gesture of impatience, said, 'Where have you placed the portrait?' 'In the wardrobe,' said she, casting at me a glance of defiance, believing that the presence of company would check my reply. 'I can well imagine,' said I, calmly, 'that the presence even of my mother's portrait, must have weighed heavily upon your spirits; but that is not a sufficient reason for hiding away in a store-room, the image of one whom, when you were needy, charitably granted to you the shelter of her roof.'"

"A well-merited rebuke," said Rodolphe: "your icy disdain must have been overwhelming."

"'Young lady!' exclaimed my father. 'Even you will confess,' continued I, still addressing Madam Roland; 'even you will admit that an individual who thus basely insults the memory of her from whom she has received kindness and alms, merits disgust and abhorrence.' 'Mademoiselle,' said my father, 'you forget that Madam Roland was your mother's friend; you forget that she is now watching over your education, as she has for a long time done with maternal care. You forget, also, that I have for her the most profound esteem; and since you have forgotten all duty and propriety in the presence of these gentlemen, I must inform you, that the mind is ungrateful and base, which, unmindful of tender care, dares to reproach with unmerited misfortune, an individual who deserves its respect and admiration.' 'I will not venture,' said I, submissively, 'to discuss this question with you, my father.' 'Perhaps I shall be able to inspire you with courage, Mademoiselle,' said Madam Roland, for once carried away beyond the bounds of her usual prudence; 'perhaps you will do me the favor not to discuss it, but to hear me avow, that far from feeling grateful to your mother in the slightest degree, I only recollect the *hauteur* with which she treated me. It was altogether contrary to her wishes that I ——' 'Madam,' said I, 'from respect to my father, spare us these mortifying revelations; you will cause me to regret having drawn from you such a shameful avowal.' 'How! Mademoiselle,' cried she, almost mad with rage; 'do you presume ——" 'I say to you, madam,' said I, interrupting her again; 'I tell you that my mother, when she suffered you to remain under her roof, instead of turning you into the street as she had a right to do, intimated to you, as clearly as possible, that she endured your presence only because she was compelled to do so.'"

"Much better," said Rodolphe; "it must have proved a complete overthrow. And this woman?"

"Madam Roland, in a vulgar but opportune manner, terminated the discussion. She cried, 'Good God!' and affected to be unwell. The two witnesses improved the opportunity to escape, under the pretext of looking for assistance. I followed their example, while my father lavished upon Madam Roland the most tender care."

"You must have encountered furious rage when you next met your father."

"The next day he came to my room, and said to me: 'To prevent the recurrence of scenes similar to that of yesterday, and of such disgraceful exhibitions of yourself, I announce to you that, as soon as the prescribed time of mourning shall have elapsed, I shall marry Madam Roland. You will then have to treat my wife with the respect which her situation will demand. For particular reasons, it is necessary that you should marry before me. Your mother's property—one million of francs—will be your portion. From this day, I shall attend to providing you with a suitable husband. Several propositions have already been made to me. The perseverance with which you attack a woman whom I have repeatedly assured you is dear to me, enables me to estimate correctly the love which you bear your father. Madam Roland despises these attacks: but I will suffer no such shameful exhibitions before strangers, while I am master of the house. Hereafter, you will not enter the drawing-room when any other persons are with Madam Roland and myself.' After this interview, I remained still more isolated. I saw my father only at the two hours of meals, which passed away in melancholy silence. My life was so sad, that I impatiently awaited the moment when my father would propose to me any match. Madam Roland, having relinquished the pleasure of abusing my mother, found a delight in tormenting me. To exasperate me, she subjected to her own personal use a thousand things which had belonged to my mother—her arm-chair, tapestry-frame, the books of her private library; even a fire-screen, which I had embroidered for her, in the centre of which was her cipher. She profaned everything."

"I can conceive," said Rodolphe, "the horror excited by these profanations, and solitude renders chagrin more severe. Had you no confidant?"

"No one. I nevertheless received one proof of interest which touched me, and which should have given me some hints in relation to the future. One of the persons who had seen me so severely upbraid Madam Roland, was Mr. Dorval, an old and worthy notary, whom my mother had conciliated by treating with civility one of his nieces. After the prohibition of my father, I never entered the saloon when strangers were present. I had not, therefore, met Mr. Dorval since that memorable interview; when one day, to my great surprise, he came to me mys-

teriously in the great avenue of the park, my usual place for exercise. 'Mademoiselle, I fear lest I shall be seen by the Count; but read this letter, and afterward burn it: it treats of an affair which concerns you nearly;' and he disappeared. In this letter, he informed me that it was my father's intention to marry me to the Marquis d'Harville, a match which seemed in every way suitable. Every one spoke of his good qualities; he was young, rich, of distinguished talents, and of prepossessing appearance: yet, notwithstanding, the families of two young girls to whom the Marquis had been engaged, had successively broken off the negotiations. The reasons of these ruptures the notary could not explain; but he deemed it his duty to inform me of them, without meaning to imply anything unfavorable to the Marquis d'Harville. The young persons referred to were, the daughter of M. de Beaurezard, a peer of France, and the daughter of Lord Boltrop. Mr. Dorval thus confided in me, because my father was so impatient to conclude this marriage, that he did not appear to the notary to have any regard for his daughter's interests."

CHAPTER IV..... THE HISTORY CONTINUED.

"In truth," said Rodolphe, after a little reflection, "I now recollect that your husband, within one year, imparted to me two marriage projects which were never consummated."

Madam d'Harville smiled bitterly, and said:

"After having read the old notary's letter, I felt as much curiosity as uneasiness. Who was the Marquis d'Harville? My father had never mentioned him: I sought in vain to recollect something about him. Suddenly, much to my astonishment, Madam Roland went to Paris. Her absence was to have lasted eight days only; nevertheless, my father seemed overwhelmed with chagrin at this temporary separation. His character became embittered; he redoubled his coldness toward me; he even answered me once, when I asked him how he was, 'I suffer, and through you.' 'Through me, sir?' 'Certainly, through you. You know how accustomed I am to the society of Madam Roland: that admirable woman, whom you have so outraged, has made, for your benefit alone, the journey which now separates her from me.' This mark of interest in Madam Roland terrified me: I had a vague idea that her absence was connected with my marriage. I leave you to imagine my father's joy at my future stepmother's return. The next day, he bade me come to his room: he was alone with her. 'I have,' said he, 'long been anxious about your establishment. In the course of a month you will dispense with your mourning. To-morrow the Marquis d'Harville, a young man of great distinction, very rich, and most capable of rendering you happy, will arrive here. He has met you in society, and is most solicitous to make you his wife. All the business affairs relative to the marriage are concluded; you must therefore resolve to marry within six weeks. If, on the contrary, from caprice or prejudice, you reject this excellent offer, I shall myself marry as soon as my term of mourning has expired. In that case, I must inform you that your presence in my house will only be welcome, on your promising to show to my wife the tenderness and respect which she deserves.' 'I understand you, father. If I do not marry the Marquis d'Harville, neither you nor Madam Roland, after your marriage, will object to my retiring to the Sacred Heart.' 'Not in the least,' he answered coldly."

"This was not weakness, but cruelty," cried Rodolphe.

"You now know, my lord, what has always prevented me from entertaining the least ill-feeling toward my father. It is a kind of presentiment, that the day is not far distant when he will suffer dearly enough for his blind love of Madam Roland. Thank Heaven! that day has not yet arrived."

"Well, you told him nothing of the information you had received from the old notary, relative to the sudden interruption, by the families, of d'Harville's two previous *fiancées*."

"Yes, my lord. That evening my father deigned, at my request, to grant me a special interview. 'I have no secrets from Madam Roland; you may say everything before her,' said he. I was silent. He repeated again, with severity, 'I have no secrets from Madam Roland: explain yourself, therefore.' 'If you will be good enough, my father, I will wait until you shall be alone.' Madam Roland rose hastily, and left us. 'Are you now satisfied?' said he; 'if so, speak.' 'I do not entertain any antipathy,' said I, 'to the match you propose for me, except that, having learned that the Marquis d'Harville was twice upon the point of marriage—' 'Well, well,' said he interposing, 'I know what was the matter. These ruptures arose from questions of interest, in which nothing objectionable was imputed to the Marquis d'Harville. If you have no other reason to assign you may already consider yourself as married, and happily too; for your well-being is dear to me.'"

"Doubtless, Madam Roland was enchanted with this union?" said Rodolphe.

"Enchanted? indeed, my lord," said Clemence bitterly, "too happy; for this match was of her own making. She had first suggested it to my father. She knew the true reasons which had interrupted his former engagements, and therefore she wished me to marry him."

"But why?"

"She wished to revenge herself upon me, by devoting me to a horrible fate."

"But your father?"

"Deceived by Madam Roland, he actually believed that some pecuniary discussions had been the cause which interrupted the previous engagements of the Marquis d'Harville."

"But what was the mysterious reason?"

"When the Marquis first arrived at Aubiers, his mind, manners, appearance, conversation, all pleased me. He appeared amiable in his disposition, but slightly affected with some depression of spirits which I could not explain. One feature of his character struck me with peculiar force, and made a powerful impression upon my heart: it was an air of timidity, of melancholy; a want of self-confidence, which contrasted strongly with his cultivated mind, his enviable fortune and illustrious birth. I was pleased with the charming good-nature with which he treated an old valet-de-chambre, who had attended him from infancy, and whose service alone he admitted. Some time after his arrival, the Marquis d'Harville remained for two days shut up in his room. My father wished very much to visit him; but the old domestic opposed it, and pretended that his master suffered severely from a nervous headache, and that it was absolutely impossible for him to see any one. When the Marquis d'Harville reappeared, he was very pale, and much changed in his general looks. For some time afterward, he manifested impatience and chagrin whenever his indisposition was mentioned. As soon as I became acquainted with the Marquis, I found him endowed with qualities with which I most heartily sympathized. His situation was in every respect so enviable, that I was astonished at his modesty. When the day for our marriage was finally appointed, he seemed to anticipate all my wishes, and lavished upon me the most refined and delicate attention. I happened, by chance, to mention to him the subject of his melancholy. He alluded to his affliction at the death of his father and mother, and to the happiness it would have afforded them to have known, that there was no charm with which the wife of his fancy could be endowed, that the wife of his choice did not possess. It would have been unkind in me to have appeared dissatisfied with a reason which was so flattering to myself. The Marquis d'Harville saw, almost intuitively, the terms upon which I had lived with Madam Roland and my father; although, elated at the prospect of my marriage, which hastened their own, they had become exceedingly cordial and affectionate toward me. But still the Marquis, with infinite tact and delicacy, made me understand that he loved me even more, if that was possible, on account of the misfortune and sorrow to which I was exposed. I thought it my duty to inform him of the intended marriage of my father, and of the effect it would have upon my dowry. He did not allow me to finish the sentence; but gave proof of such noble disinterestedness, that the thought forcibly impressed itself upon my mind, that the families to an alliance with which the Marquis had aspired, must be exceedingly grasping and avaricious to have had with him any controversy upon pecuniary matters."

"You express precisely the views which I have always entertained of his character. I have always found him endowed with a noble head, filled with generosity and refinement. But did you never allude to his two previous engagements, which had been interrupted?"

"I must own, my lord, that when I found him endowed with such excellent qualities, I was frequently upon the point of questioning him upon the subject; but the fear of wounding his delicacy, forced me to desist from alluding to it. The nearer we approached the nuptial day, the stronger were the Marquis's expressions of affection and happiness; yet, on one or two occasions, I saw him oppressed with a profound melancholy. One day, in particular, I saw a tear moisten his eyes, as they were fixed upon me, and he seemed only restrained by his fear, from confiding to me some important secret. The recollection of his two former disappointments came forcibly to my mind, not without a premonitory fear. An involuntary presentiment informed me, that the happiness of my whole future life might be involved in the disclosures which he seemed desirous of imparting; but my condition at my father's house was so miserable, that I banished my apprehensions."

"And did not the Marquis make any confession to you?"

"No! When I asked him the cause of his melancholy, he solicited me to pardon the shadow which occasionally rested upon his spirits; it served, he said, to moderate the intemperance of his joy—words, which were spoken in such a touching tone, completely to reassure me. How could I, when his eyes were filled with tears, evince any selfishness or mistrust? The two attestors of the Marquis, the Duke de Lucenay and Viscount de Saint Remy, arrived a few days previous to the marriage. The nearest relations of our house, were the only guests present at the ceremony. We were to leave for Paris immediately after our nuptials. I felt no love for the Marquis d'Harville, but his character inspired me with great respect and esteem. Had it not been for the events which followed this disastrous union, I might have been touched by a tenderer sentiment, which would have enshrined him for ever in the best affections of my heart. We were married——"

At these words, the Marchioness's color slightly changed, and it seemed for a moment, that her resolution had abandoned her; but in a few moments she continued as follows:

"After the ceremony was concluded, my father embraced me tenderly in his arms, and Madam Roland honored me with an equally affectionate greeting. In presence of so large a company, I could not well avoid submitting to her perfidious endearments. She took my hand into her dry and thin fingers, and whispered in my ear with her sweetest tone, these words, which I never shall forget: 'In the midst of your happiness, think occasionally of me; for it is to me you are indebted for your marriage!' Alas! I was far from comprehending the hidden import of her words. The ceremony was performed at eleven o'clock in the morning. We immediately entered our carriage with a female servant of mine, and the old valet of the Marquis, and travelled so rapidly, that we reached Paris before ten in the evening. I should have been alarmed and astonished at the silence of the Marquis, if he had not previously informed me that his happiness was of a melancholy character. As for myself, I was deeply affected. It was the first time that I had returned to Paris since my mother's death; and, although I had left few things to regret in my father's mansion, it was still my home. I was now going to a mansion where everything would be new to me; my sole acquaintance there, my husband, whom I had known but six weeks, and who, even up to the day which preceded our marriage, had never addressed me except in the most ceremonious manner. Mankind, generally, do not understand the effect upon the timid mind of a female, of that sudden change of manner which the most refined of men assume immediately after marriage. A wife cannot, in a few hours, forget all the scruples and delicacy of a young girl. Nothing appears to me more uncivilized, than the privileges which husbands assume the moment the bride leaves the paternal roof. Marriage should be but a consecration of all the influences which can be brought to bear on the complicated nature of the soul, to inspire and perpetuate hymenial love. You can understand, my lord, the tumult of emotion which pervaded my soul, when, with all the vague distresses of an inexperienced mind, I returned to the city where my mother had expired but a year before. We reached the hotel d'Harville."

The Marchioness's face was covered with burning blushes as she continued, with a painful voice:

"You must, however, be made acquainted with everything, or I cannot expect to escape your censure. Well," added she, summoning her resolution, "I was shown into the apartment destined for me, and was soon joined by the Marquis. I felt, for the first time, the absolute authority which I had yielded to him in becoming his bride. The Marquis's assurances of the tenderest and most devoted affection, did not alleviate my alarm or check the palpitation of my heart. But suddenly my husband while seated by my side, seized my arm with convulsive force, and uttered a cry of intense agony. I struggle in vain to release myself from that iron grasp; I implore his compassion; I appeal to his love, alas! he hears me not; his face is distorted with preternatural muscular contraction; his eyes roll in their sockets with a terrifying rapidity; his mouth fills with mingled blood and foam; his fingers gripe with maniacal strength; I rescue my arm from his grasp, by a desperate effort, and I fell fainting, while the Marquis d'Harville was convulsed with the paroxysm of an epileptic fit."

"Unhappy lady!" said Rodolphe; "I am well acquainted with the distressing symptoms of that terrible visitation."

"And this is not all," added Clemence, in a most distressed voice; "may the fatal night be blotted from the calendar! My daughter, the sweet little cherub of innocence and love, has inherited this most awful of human maladies."

"Your daughter! alas, what a painful solution of her weakness and delicacy."

"Yes, it is that! it is that! and the hereditary disease which will make the existence with which we have cursed her, an unceasing torment, the best medical advisers pronounce incurable."

Rodolphe could not open his lips in response. His imagination recoiled before the terrible mysteries of this bridal night. He identified himself with the emotion of a young, refined and imaginative female—melted into sadness already by returning to the city, associated in her mind with the dying agonies of a mother she had adored—entering her new and untried abode; left alone with the lord for whom she felt nothing of that which charms, nothing of that which subdues, nothing of that which merges all fear in a higher sentiment. No, no: the victimized bride enters her hymeneal retreat, dejected, cold, with a broken heart; blushing only with confusion, with eyes that glistened only with tears, submissive, resigned; and instead of hearing such words as have power to vanquish alarm, meeting those glances which can express what words cannot; instead of receiving caresses which could soothe away fear and soften any descent, finds rolling at her feet the convulsed and distorted frame of him to whom she was united by an indissoluble tie—the foam of madness exuding from his lips; the awful eye of delirium glaring from its socket; his limbs springing with the spasms of epilepsy, and a cry of agony breaking from his tortured form! And this is not all: a child is born, convulsed with this cureless malady from her birth. How iniquitous is the law! thus the reflections of Rodolphe ran. What remedy has a beautiful and confiding female—enticed into wedlock by fraud and concealment, the pure and innocent victim of the most cruel dissimulation; who wakes from the illusion in which her senses have been wrapped by all the appliances of stratagem and deceit, which would render infamous and vitiate beyond redemption, a contract which involved the most insignificant pecuniary pittance—to find herself united beyond redress to a man afflicted with the most revolting of those diseases to which humanity is heir! a life of wo entailed upon herself—a heritage of disease upon her offspring! What remedy has the unfortunate victim whose whole happiness rests upon this contract, into which she has been involved by such criminal duplicity? What remedy! none: none but suffering and tears; none but an incessant struggle with fear and disgust; none but a life of resigned anguish and patient terror; none but to seek in indulgences which the law condemns as an oblivion of that tie which the same law will not dissolve.

In these laws the brute creation, by the care lavished upon them, the improvements of which they are the object, and the higher guaranties which regulate their transfer and delivery, seem to be entitled to a higher consideration than the human family. A man can summon to his aid all the formalities of judicature, and the entire executive authority of the law, to relieve him from his connection with any animal in which he has been deceived. If a man buys a horse, and discovers that he has been imposed upon by the arts of a skilful jockey; if, after the bargain is closed, some distemper is discovered, or some "latent defect" appear; the contract is pronounced null, or the purchaser indemnified. In the eye of the righteous law, it is an iniquity which its whole power should redress, to compel a man to keep a horse that is sprung, spavined, or blind, a mule that coughs, sneezes, or limps, for a week, a month, perhaps a year. Oh, yes! to be forced to ride a distempered nag, for the shortest period of time, is a calamity not to be tolerated by this scrupulous law! What misery it would produce, what injuries it would entail, on the moral, social well-being of the human race! But if the fraud concerns a creature made in the image of God; if a young and confiding female, whose innocence and youth entitle her to the special protection of all rational legislation, is imposed upon by frauds, which are soon exposed beyond denial; but acting under the delusion, ratifies the marriage contract, and finds herself chained for her entire mortal existence to epilepsy and delirium; her condition is remediless—the snare into which she has been duped, can be snapped only by death. A connection, into which one of the parties was thus fraudulently entrapped into perpetual companionship with disease; a connection, the physical and moral consequences of which are terrible beyond endurance; destroying the tenderest affections; perverting the whole moral nature; corrupting the holiest instincts; changing charity into malignity; converting domestic peace into domestic war; counteracting all the objects of the family organization; supplanting with premature decay the bloom of childhood, and transmitting diseased and vitiated blood to the remotest generations—such a connection is inviolable, sacred, and indissoluble, in the eye of the inexorable law! Oh! the law!

excellent, when it regards the relation between a man and a lame horse! cautious in the safeguards which it throws around the transfer of animals, it releases man from an unfortunate purchase which he has made; but it will not relieve a woman who has been cheated out of her happiness, who has bartered away the tranquillity of her soul for hopeless and unmitigated misery. To relieve from such a fraudulent union, is to offend God and man; to dissolve it, sacrilegious! "Truly," said Rodolphe to himself, "man is sometimes endowed with a humility that is shameful, and a pride and selfishness very excusable; he humbles himself beneath the brutes, by protecting them with guaranties which he denies to himself; and he hallows and consecrates his most terrible infirmities, under the inviolable sanction of human and divine law."

CHAPTER V..... CHARITY.

While Rodolphe visited with such severe objurgations the Marquis d'Harville, he hoped to be able to exonerate him in some degree in Clemence's estimation, although he was convinced by her sad disclosures, that her heart was for ever alienated from him. The following train of thought passed through Rodolphe's mind.

Through a sense of duty I forsook the society of a woman I loved; and who, perhaps, already entertained for me a secret affection, from absolute vacancy of the heart, or morbid commiseration. She was on the point of sacrificing her honor and her life to a fool, whom she was persuaded to believe was miserable and desperate. If, instead of avoiding her, I had continued to cultivate her society, and manifested for her the affection and esteem which I really felt, I might have saved her from her exposure to the mercy and indiscretion of Mr. Charles Robert, who will probably compensate for his disappointments, by sly givings out, or more open boasts. I could, moreover, have tempered my intercourse with such scrupulous reserve, that her own character would not have been compromised, nor her husband's jealousy aroused. And who knows whether the heart of the Marchioness will continue to be unoccupied? Her husband certainly can never be viewed by her, except as an object of aversion. Young, beautiful, endowed with a most sympathetic soul, how many dangers surround her! For the Marquis, what anguish and sorrow are in store! Jealous and devotedly fond, the repulsive husband can never overcome the horror which the first night of his fatal nuptials inspired. What a fate awaits him!

The Marchioness sat, overwhelmed with the excitement which her narration had produced, and with moist eyes and burning cheeks, avoided the glance of Rodolphe: so painful had been the disclosure which she had been compelled to make, in order to exculpate her conduct.

"I now understand," said Rodolphe, after a long silence, "the reason of the Marquis's melancholy, which has heretofore defied my penetration. I now understand his regrets."

"His regrets! say rather his remorse, my lord; for never was a crime more cruelly premeditated."

"A crime! Marchioness!"

"What other name shall I bestow upon the duplicity by which I was united to a man, whom I treated with the most scrupulous confidence, while he concealed a conscious infirmity which could not fail to inspire horror and affright? What is it but a crime, to entail upon this unfortunate child a heritage of wo? Could not the Marquis d'Harville be satisfied with one victim? Because he was pleased with my birth, my fortune, and my person, must he sacrifice my whole existence to his weariness with the solitude to which his affliction condemned him?"

"I beg of your ladyship to be moved with pity, at least."

"Pity! it is all exhausted upon my daughter—the offspring of this odious union. How many days, how many many nights, have I watched by her side—how many bitter tears have I shed over her suffering couch!"

"But her father was touched, also, with the same compassion."

"But it was her father who condemned her to this suffering and joyless infancy, to a faded youth, to an age of solitude and sorrow; for she shall never marry. I love her too much to expose her to what I have myself endured for her sake. I have been rendered too miserable by one treachery, to become an accomplice in another."

"You were right, Marchioness; your stepmother has inflicted a terrible vengeance. Have patience, my dear lady, the hour of redress will one day arrive; you shall be in your turn avenged," said Rodolphe after a moment's pause, during which the unnatural expression to which we have so frequently alluded, stole over his features.

"What can you mean, my lord?" asked Clemence, surprised and astonished at the tone of his voice and the glance of his eye.

"Oh, it has been my rare fortune to see punishment, commensurate with their crimes, frequently inflicted upon wicked people. I have a strong belief in a retributive justice upon earth," said the Prince, in a tone which did not dissipate his companion's surprise; "but on the day which followed that eventful night, what did your husband say to you?"

"He confessed to me, with singular frankness, that the discovery of his infirmity had been the cause of interrupting his previous engagements. So that, after having been twice disappointed, he could yet——I cannot endure the contemplation; it is infamous. This, however, is what the world calls a gentleman, and a man of honor."

"You, who are so invariably good, appear to me, in this case, cruel."

"I am cruel, because I have been basely betrayed. The Marquis d'Harville knew the character of my disposition. Why did he not appeal to it, by making a free confession of the whole truth?"

"You would have rejected him!"

"That one sentence, my lord, convicts the Marquis of unmitigated treachery!"

"But he loved you!"

"Does that justify a man in sacrificing a woman to his selfishness? I was so tormented, I was so anxious to leave my father's house, that perhaps his frankness would have moved me; perhaps I should have been affected with compassion for the solitude and proscription to which his terrible malady condemned him; perhaps, if I had seen him so confiding and unhappy, I should not have had the heart to reject him. If I had thus voluntarily assumed the sacred engagement of alleviating his sorrows, I would have persevered in my devotion with unswerving constancy, and unfaltering courage; but to extort from me compassion, by gaining, fraudulently, possession of my person, and imposing upon me the marriage vow; to exact interest and pity, by appealing to the duties of a relation, into which I never should have been involved, if he had not forgotten the duties of an honest man; is a degree of perfidy and baseness which would blight such tender flowers as pity and charity in the bud. You can now judge, my lord, of the enviable situation to which I have been condemned; you can imagine the first pang of awakened conviction, and the flashing of the certainty upon me, that he to whose fidelity I had trusted, was a base deceiver; and that the melancholy which had interested me, believing his assurance that it was due to domestic bereavement, was nothing but the ever present consciousness of the disgust which his incurable malady must inspire in the bosom of his wife."

"But were he a stranger, or an enemy, I should think that the sight of his sufferings would move your compassion; for your heart is noble and generous."

"But can I alleviate those sufferings? If, in the paroxysms of this frenzy, my voice could reach his disordered senses; if that eye, rolling in delirium, could be moved by the compassionating glance of my own; I might be melted into sorrow at least. But, my lord, you cannot be aware how fatally unsusceptible of all alleviating influences a man is when struggling with the demon which seems to take temporary possession of his soul, and expel from it every human instinct; how incapable he is of hearing, of seeing, or of feeling, the most heart-rending and passionate appeals which can be addressed; how he passes from one state of spasmodic frenzy into another, and finally emerges from the rage of madness, to fall even in his last condition into the abyss of despondency! When my daughter is attacked by one of these fits, all that I can do, is to stand a passive spectator of suffering which I cannot relieve; or to kiss, in impotent compassion, the poor little arms which are tortured by those convulsions that are killing her. But she is my daughter, my daughter! What humanity is capable of doing, I could do for her; what the finite soul can sacrifice, I can sacrifice for her; what mortal beings are capable of suffering, I can endure—but standing by her side, utterly unable to relieve her anguish, to soften one pang, to prevent one convulsion; I cannot—no, I cannot compassionate the father who has been the sole cause of her remediless misery. When I stand thus powerless at her suffering couch, I am ready to curse the father; but as her pain is relieved, my anger toward him diminishes. Did I marry, at the age of seventeen, to alternate between the torture of anguish and the torture of wrath? to weep over a child that I may lose too soon; and to weep over a husband who had the heartless cruelty to inflict this wo upon both of us? Even a mother's affection for a daughter, is not presented to my lips without dregs and bitter-

ness being mingled in the cup. I love her most devotedly; but this heartfelt tenderness is disturbed by so much sympathy for her suffering, so many fears for the future, that it is perhaps the crowning affliction of my comfortless existence. Allow me to anticipate a reproach, which I am too conscious must be upon your lips. You may think that her loveliness, and her interesting character, were sufficient to satisfy all the yearnings of my heart. But, as I have told you, her incurable disease, and the sight of sufferings to which I cannot minister, is the most torturing anguish which I endure. To escape from an atmosphere which is heavy with affliction and gloom, to seek a moment's intermission of this incessant strain upon the heart, I had dreamed, in the recesses of my own bosom, of an attachment which should so enlist all my thoughts, as to afford a temporary refuge and repose from misery. I was deceived, grossly deceived; cheated by lies, and by perfidy; a victim of my own imagination; a compassionate sympathizer with a grief that was feigned. But, awaking from this dream, which has never touched my heart nor forfeited my own self-respect, I have fallen back into the routine of painful existence to which my ill-fated marriage has condemned me. Tell me, my lord, if upon my head alone rests the fault of this morning?—a great one to be sure, and for which I cannot but blush, and for which the Marquis d'Harville would have made me pay with my life. What you overheard, my lord, of the conversation which passed between the Countess McGregor and her brother, will, fortunately, spare me the shame of a new confession. But I hope at least, that you will think that I have sufficiently extenuated my indiscretion, and have exhibited strong claims enough upon your pity to deserve the advice which I have solicited, in a situation with which you are now thoroughly acquainted."

"I cannot express to you, Marchioness, how much I have been affected by your narrative, from the death of your mother, to the birth of your daughter. How many sorrows have you concealed! how much grief have you buried in your bosom! you, who have been the star of the most brilliant circle—admired and envied by all hearts!"

"When we are conscious of being wretched, my lord, nothing is more painful than to hear it said, 'how happy she must be.'"

"Truly, nothing is more so. You are not alone, however, in suffering from the cruel contrast between the real and apparent. In the eyes of mankind, your husband even must appear happier than you are yourself, since you are his wife. But how much is he to be pitied! Can there be a more horrible existence than his? His wrongs toward you are great, but they have been terribly avenged. He loves you as you deserve to be; and he knows that you can only entertain for him an insurmountable repugnance. His sickly and agonized daughter is a constant protest against his treachery. This is not all: the pangs of jealousy must necessarily visit him."

"And what can I do to relieve all this? Not to give him any occasion for jealousy—that is true; but because my heart is given to no one, will it necessarily revert to him? He knows the contrary. Since the frightful scene which I have just narrated, we have lived separately; but in the eyes of the world I have been all to him which the most rigid propriety could exact, and I have never disclosed to a human being, except yourself, this fatal secret."

"And I assure you, Marchioness, if the services which I have rendered deserved any reward, I have been amply compensated by the confidence which you have reposed in me. But since you have had the kindness to ask my advice, and will allow me the liberty of speaking with frankness——"

"I beg of you to do so, my lord."

"Allow me then to tell you, that by not bringing into active exercise the most predominating trait of your character, you are depriving yourself of the most intense gratification; which might in some measure satisfy the yearnings of your heart, alleviate your domestic infelicity, and would certainly inspire you with those lively emotions which seem to me to be necessary for your enjoyment. The exertion, moreover, to which I allude—you will pardon my discourtesy—would also minister to that taste for mystery, which I believe is inherent in your sex."

"To what do you allude, my lord?"

"I mean, if you would devote yourself to benevolent enterprises, if you would amuse yourself with acts of charity, nothing would contribute more to your mental health."

The Marchioness looked at Rodolphe with surprise.

"You will understand, that I do not mean that you should send a purse filled with gold—with indifference, almost with scorn—as an alms to some poor people, of whose claims upon your compassion you are entirely ignorant. But if, like myself, you interested yourself now and then in charitable romances; if you would act as the minister of a discerning Providence, in meting out rewards to the deserving, you would soon find that such efforts would have to you all the piquant interest of a highly-wrought fiction."

"I have never thought, my lord, of looking to charity as an *amusement*," said the Marchioness, smiling.

"It is a discovery of my own," said the Prince, "the proximate cause of which was my repugnance to what is tedious; but a more final one, conference with my ministers, which I believe first gave birth to that repugnance. But to return to charity as an amusement: I have not the disinterested and self-denying virtue, I confess, of those charitable beings who depute to others the luxury of dispensing their alms. A few hundred louis given to my chamberlain to distribute in each district of Paris, would, I confess it to my pain, afford but little pleasure to my selfish nature. Good works, in the way that I understand the term, is the most *amusing* employment in the world. I insist upon that word, because it only explains to my mind the thousand novel pleasures and nameless charms of doing good. If you would condescend to become my accomplice in certain mysterious charitable *intrigues*, you would find that, independent of the noble consciousness of well-doing which always accompanies such acts, the practical discharge is attended with an excitement and interest which nothing in the world can eclipse. You cannot conceive of the mystery and precaution which it is necessary to adopt, to conceal the source from which the bounty flows, in these charitable adventures. You cannot conceive of the thousand intense and ever variable emotions, the sight of poor, honest people inspires, who weep at your appearance in their comfortless abodes. It is more like an intrigue than anything else; your emotions are as rapid and varied as they were during your walk to the rue du Temple, this morning. You must dress very simply, in order to shun observation. You leave your house with a palpitating heart; filled with fear you steal into a hack, the blinds of which you would close to avoid discovery; throwing your eyes about to see if you were discovered, you would alight and enter some miserable tenement resembling the one where I found you this morning. The only difference is, that, if discovered—in the one case you are lost, in the other you are blessed. But a lady of your modesty, who is always so desirous of hiding her excellent qualities, would employ the greatest cunning in order to escape the blessing."

"My lord!" exclaimed the Marchioness, with emotion, "you have saved me. I cannot express to you the new thoughts, the new hopes, the cheerful ideas which your novel plan inspires. Your views are perfectly right. To engross the heart entirely, to make one's self adored by the grateful poor, is almost equal to the delight of love—what do I say! it is better than to love; for when I compare the pleasure which I anticipate, with the results which would have followed, had I not been rescued from my shameful error, my reproaches become still more embittered."

"I am sorry, if that is the case," said Rodolphe; "for my desire is to aid you to forget the past, and to prove to you that there are numerous devices for distracting the heart. The means which we employ in two widely different intrigues, are nearly the same; the consequences only differ; and if good can be rendered as attractive and amusing as evil, what can the most faithful devotee of pleasure alledge in favor of the latter? I wish to draw a very common comparison. Why is it, that so many females lavish their affections upon those who are in every respect inferior to their husbands? Confess, it is the mere spirit of adventure. If we should abstract from such an affair, the pains, the fears, the difficulties, the dangers, and the mysteries, and left the lover alone, disrobed of circumstance, it would be a very tame and spiritless flirtation. It puts me in mind of the man who, having been engaged for fifteen years in courting a widow, replied to a friend, who asked him why he did not marry her, by saying 'that he should not know where to spend his evenings.'"

"There is a great deal of naturalness in the response," said the Marchioness.

"Well; if I find means of procuring for you all those exciting fears and pleasant anxieties, all those distresses and alarms, which are usually considered so attractive; if I *utilize* your taste for mystery, and your spirit of adventure, that disposition for intrigue and *ruse* peculiar to your sex—pardon me again—shall I not devote to a noble purpose, instincts which are excellent, if properly used, but become fatal from abuse? Come, tell me; shall we together form various charitable contrivances? Shall we conspire together for the relief of the honest and deserving poor? We should have our rendezvous, our correspondence, our go-betweens, our secrets, and especially would we conceal our projects from the Marquis, for your visit to the Morels this morning will put him on the *qui vive*. In fine, the life I describe would be one uninterrupted intrigue."

"I accept, with joy and gratitude, your proposal; for a myste-

rious partnership, my lord," said Clemence, cheerfully. "And to commence our romance, I will return to-morrow and visit those unfortunate people, to whom this morning I could only offer some words of consolation: for taking advantage of my embarrassment and fear, a little lame urchin stole from me the purse you had the goodness to give. Alas! my lord," and pleasure and cheerfulness vanished from the face of Clemence, "I was not aware of the existence of such frightful poverty. I blame myself and accuse my destiny!"

Rodolphe, unwilling that the Marchioness should perceive how much he was moved by this exhibition of the complete purity of Clemence's soul, answered gayly, "You must excuse me, my dear Marchioness, but I regard the Morels as belonging to myself personally, and I will not invest them in our partnership stock. I will take charge of them exclusively, and I entreat you not to return to that house, for I live there myself."

"You, my lord? Are you serious?"

"Never more so: it is a humble lodging, to be sure. Two hundred francs for my rent, besides six francs to Madam Pipelet, the interesting portière whose acquaintance your ladyship formed, for taking charge of my room. I have for my neighbor, Mademoiselle Rigolette, the prettiest grisette in the district. You must admit, I think, that for a merchant's clerk, with eighteen hundred francs a year, my situation is very comfortable."

"Your presence, so unexpected in this fatal house, proves to me that you are in earnest, my lord. Some generous action attracts you here without doubt. But what good work do you reserve for me? what part shall be mine?"

"That of an angel of consolation, and—excuse the word—a demon of art and cunning; for there are certain delicate and painful wounds, that woman's hand alone can heal and cure. There are also unfortunate creatures, so moody, retiring and proud, that an acute penetration is needful to discover them, and an irresistible charm to attract their confidence."

"And when shall I exhibit this penetration, this skill, of which you imagine me to be possessed?" impatiently asked Madam d'Harville.

"Soon, I hope; you will have to make a conquest worthy of yourself, and to employ the most Machiavellian measures."

"And when, my lord, will you confide this great secret to me?"

"You are already anxious for the rendezvous: will you be so kind as to grant me an interview within three or four days?"

"Must I wait so long!" asked Clemence naively.

"What is otherwise to become of mystery and diplomacy? If we were believed accomplices, we should be distrusted. I shall, perhaps, be forced to write to you. Who is this old woman who brought your letter to me this evening?"

"An old servant of my mother's; an incarnation of prudence and discretion——"

"To her, then, I shall address my letters. She will give them to you. If you will be good enough to reply to them, direct, '*To Mr. Rodolphe, rue Plumet.*' Your femme de chambre will put your letters into the post."

"I shall myself do it, my lord, when I take my usual walk."

"Do you walk alone often!"

"Almost every day, when the weather is good."

"Excellent! It is a habit which all women should form in the first months of their marriage, under some kind of pretext. If the custom exist, as the lawyers say, it is a precedent established; and afterward, these every-day walks will never be liable to ill-natured interpretations. Were I a woman, the day after my marriage, in pure innocence, I would have assumed the most mysterious bearing. I should surround myself with the most compromising appearances, for the express purpose of establishing, as I said, this precedent, in order that I always might be able to visit my pensioners, or my lover."

"But what frightful perfidy that would be, my lord!" said the Marchioness, with a smile.

"Fortunately, your ladyship has not comprehended either the necessity or the wisdom of these precautions."

The Marchioness ceased to smile, hung her head, blushed, and said in a sorrowful tone:

"You are not generous, my lord."

Rodolphe looked with astonishment at the Marchioness, and said:

"I understand you, Marchioness: but let us for a moment examine your position in regard to Mr. Robert. One day, a female friend directed your attention to one of those beggars, who cast their eyes about in a melancholy and entreating manner, and play some touching airs upon the clarionet, to excite the compassion of the passer-by: 'That is an excellent man,' said your friend: 'but he is exceedingly poor and miserable; he has at least seven children, and a wife who is deaf, dumb and blind.' 'Poor man!' you replied, most charitably bestowing upon him your alms Afterward, whenever you met the beggar, he casts upon you most imploring glances; the clarionet gives forth its most heart-moving tones; and your hand instinctively drops money into his pouch. On one occasion, distressed at the apparent misery of the unfortunate man, you resolve to visit him in the midst of his want and wretchedness; you arrived at his house but heard nothing of the lamenting tones of the clarionet; saw no melting and beseeching looks. On the contrary, you found a merry, happy, jovial rogue, ready to dance a jig or troll forth a song in any cabaret. Contempt immediately supplanted the place of pity; you had mistaken a miserable hypocrite for a good and honest man. Was it not so?"

The Marchioness could not but smile at this singular apology, and answered Rodolphe:

"Your justification, my lord, is as grateful to my feelings as it is unsatisfactory to my reason."

"After all, my dear Marchioness, you have but yielded to an excited and indiscreet compassion. But shall I not see the Marquis this evening?"

"No, my lord: he was so excited by the events of the morning, that he is now indisposed," said the Marchioness, in a low, but significant voice.

"I understand," said Rodolphe; "but I beg of you, Marchioness, to suffer your courage to revive. You have told me that you needed but some object to divert your melancholy. You will find that object in the life of active charity which I propose; and I even hope, that as a ministering angel of consolation to afflicted humanity, your spirit will be so softened and subdued, that you will no longer cherish any resentment against your husband. You will, I hope, transfer to him a portion of that love which is now exclusively devoted to your daughter; and as I am acquainted with the nature of her complaint, I will encourage you not to despair of her complete restoration to health."

"My lord, is it possible!" exclaimed the grateful and sanguine mother, clasping her hands in thanksgiving.

"The physician who attends me, is a man unknown to fame, but in whose professional skill I have the most unlimited confidence. He has spent several years in America. I recollect hearing him speak of some wonderful cures which he had performed there, of slaves attacked with this awful malady."

"My lord, can it be possible that her health can be restored?"

"Be not too sanguine, Marchioness: I am merely justified in telling you not to despair."

Clemence d'Harville cast a glance of ineffable gratitude upon the noble countenance of Rodolphe. He seemed a heavenly being sent to inspire her with hope, when she had reached the lowest abyss of despair; with such intelligence, grace and kindness did he sympathize with her misery. The inquiry forced itself upon her, by what strange perversion of all her ordinary tastes, Mr. Charles Robert had succeeded in interesting even her compassion.

"What do I not owe to you, my lord?" said she in an excited tone; "you inspire me with confidence in spite of myself; you compel me to hope for my daughter; you spread out a futurity before me of which I never have had the courage to dream. Did I not speak the truth when I informed you in my letter, that if you would come here this evening, you would finish the day as you had commenced it, by a generous action?

"And one of those actions which I so much admire:" a source of incomparable delight, of extatic pleasure," added the Prince, rising from his seat; for eleven was just striking from the clock in the parlor.

"Adieu, my lord: do not forget to give me the earliest information about these unfortunate people in rue du Temple."

"I shall visit them in the morning. I unfortunately forgot that I had seen the young cripple running away with the purse he had purloined; I fear they may be reduced to the severest extremity of want. In four days—do not forget it—I will inform you of the part I have assigned to you, and which you have condescended to play. I can only announce to you, at present, that a disguise may be requisite."

"A disguise! it will be delightful!" said the Marchioness; "pray, what shall it be?"

"I cannot inform you yet; I will leave to your own taste the selection."

During his walk to his own mansion, the Prince found himself abundantly satisfied with the result of his conversation with the Marchioness. The following suggestion for his future conduct occurred to him: To infuse generous sentiments into the mind of this unfortunate female, who was separated from her husband by the revolting nature of his malady; to inspire her with sufficient of romantic curiosity; to interest her so much in enterprises of benevolence, as to fortify her heart and imagina-

tion against any new entanglement; or to inspire Clemence d'Harville with a passion so pure, so elevated, so noble, that she would be for ever incapable of a less exalted affection, and would never compromise the repose of the Marquis, whom the Prince loved as a brother.

CHAPTER VI. ..... MISERY.

Perhaps the reader has not forgotten an importunate family who occupied the garret of the house in rue du Temple, which Rodolphe had visited by the name of Morel, who was himself a lapidary. Will the reader now accompany us to this miserable abode? It is five o'clock in the morning, the streets are profoundly silent, the darkness intense, and the atmosphere filled with snow. A miserable candle, sustained in its position by two chips of wood, scarcely penetrated with its dim and flickering light, the darkness of the garret—a wretched kennel—two-thirds of which could not be occupied on account of the roof, which formed a very acute angle with the floor. The tiles were seen distinctly through wide interstices. The plaster on the wall, dark and smoked, and worn off in many places, disclosed the lath and naked walls; a door, hanging by one hinge, opened on to the stairway; the floor, stained and greasy, is strewn here and there with fragments of decayed straw, filthy rags and large bones, which paupers buy of the lowest dealers in tainted meat, to gnaw off the cartilage which may still adhere.

Such a frightful degree of neglect announced either gross misconduct, or that depth of overwhelming and hopeless misery which so prostrates all the mental and moral elements of the victim's nature, that, conscious of no will or disposition to escape from its clutches, he grovels in his degradation like a brute in its kennel. During the day, this most wretched abode was lighted by an oblong window, cut out of one of the roofs, having a sash that opens and shuts by means of a hook. The window was now covered with a thick coating of snow. The candle standing upon the bench of the lapidary, which was placed near the centre of the garret, threw out a cone of pale light which, gradually growing more and more dim, lost itself in the darkness which hid the angle of the roof with the floor, where some white forms were indistinctly seen.

On the work-bench—a heavy table, formed of oak roughly hewn—a handful of diamonds and rubies, of great size and brilliancy, shone amid the stains and grease which covered it. Morel, to whose care these priceless gems were committed, had given out in the house that he was a worker in false stones; and in consequence of this harmless deceit, he retained these jewels without any apprehension of being robbed.

Such treasures intrusted to such misery, are a sufficient comment upon the honesty of the lapidary.

Seated on a chair without a back, overcome by fatigue, cold and want of sleep, after a long winter's night passed at work, the lapidary had placed his weary head and benumbed arms upon his bench. His head rested upon his grindstone, which was fixed horizontally upon the table, and ordinarily was moved by a crank. A saw of fine steel, and some other tools, lay strewn about. The artisan, whose yellow neck alone was seen, covered with gray hairs, wore only a jacket of brown serge, without a shirt, and a pair of pantaloons of poor cloth. His list slippers, full of holes, scarcely concealed his embrowned feet, which were resting upon the hearth.

So penetrating was the cold in this garret, that the artisan, in spite of the state of somnolence in which the exhaustion of his strength had plunged him, shivered in every limb. The unsnuffed length of the candle-wick announced that Morel had been some time sleeping. His oppressed respiration alone was heard, for the other six inhabitants of the garret were awake. Yes, seven persons lived in this horrible abode! five children, of whom the youngest was four, and the eldest not yet twelve years old—their mother pining with sickness, their grandmother an octogenarian, and an idiot. The cold must have been very severe, since the natural heat of seven persons, crowded into so small a space, would not warm the icy atmosphere; but such emaciated, worn-out and trembling bodies, throw off but little caloric, according to a chemical law. Except the father of the family—for the moment overcome by the exhaustion of his strength—not one of the group closed their eyes: cold, hunger and sickness tortured their frames. The rich do not know how rare and precious a boon sleep is to the poor! It is then that he forgets his suffering and refreshes his strength; it is then that he hears not the cries of his children pining with hunger, nor the voice of the taskmaster goading him to labor. He awakes with all the joy that poverty can feel, with his muscles nerved for his weary toil, grateful that even this blessing is not denied; and following the effect to the Final Cause, adores the Almighty for not leaving him in unmitigated wretchedness.

The frightful misery of the artisan, compared with the value of the jewels committed to his charge, exhibits to us one of those contrasts which at the same time elevate and afflict the heart. Before him, constantly, was the spectacle of his family suffering every misery which the imagination can conceive—cold, hunger, madness: yet he respected those gems, a single one of which would have snatched his wife and children from privations which were killing them. He discharged his duty—the duty of an honest man; but, sensible of what temptations lay between him and its fulfilment, did not the circumstances under which this virtuous action was performed, materially augment its merit? This artisan—honest when encompassed by want—is but a representative of an immense mass of mankind who, condemned to lasting privations, remain laborious, peaceful, resigned, and daily survey the magnificence and splendor of others, without one throb of envy. Is it not a consoling thought, that no external force, no terror from within, but true morality and genuine honor, restrain this immense popular ocean? which, were it to overflow, as the sea does its embankments, in defiance of all law and authority, it would bury society beneath its waters. Let us examine more minutely this actual specimen of misery: we will attempt to strip it of every disguise. The lapidary had but one thin mattress, which was devoted to the idiot grandmother; who, in her wilful and stupid selfishness, would share her covering with no one. At the commencement of the winter, in a fit of frenzy, she had nearly strangled the youngest of the children, a little girl of four years old, who was afflicted with some form of phthisis, and suffered much from the cold, in the bed where she slept with her brothers and sisters. We will explain at once this method of sleeping, which prevails among the poor; compared with which the beds of animals are the couch of a Sybarite. Along the transverse partition—less moist than any other wall—the mattress of the idiot rested. Her head was without any covering, upon which the white hair, shaved close, displayed the form of her cranium; and eyebrows of thick gray shaded the deep orbits in which the eye of idiocy glared with a frightful energy. Her livid and hollow cheeks, marked with a thousand wrinkles, clung to her toothless gums. Lying upon her side, and doubled in such a manner that her chin nearly touched her knees, she shook and chattered beneath the covering of gray wool, which, too small to envelop her, displayed her withered legs and the end of her tattered chemise—the only covering of her nakedness.

Not far from the bed of the idiot stood the bed in which five children slept. Two holes were cut in each extremity of the sacking, into one of which, amid the damp and nauseous straw, two little girls were thrust—one an invalid—and into the other, the three small boys, the sacking serving both as sheets and covering. The five children all slept in their ordinary clothes, if the poor rags they usually wore deserve that appellation. Thick yellow hair, in snarles and tangles, which their mother had permitted to grow as some protection against the cold, half conceals their pale and suffering faces. One of the boys, with his thin fingers, drew portions of the sacking toward him to protect him from the cold; the other, fearing to expose his fingers to the biting air, held the sacking between his chattering teeth; and the third clung close to his two brothers. The second of the two daughters, whom consumption had already marked as its victim, leaned languidly her emaciated form upon the icy bosom of her sister, not five years old, who tried in vain to warm her within her embracing arms. Upon another bed at the extremity of the room, where for several months she had been, the artisan's wife was seen, panting with the morbid heat of fever. Madeleine Morel was thirty years of age. A blue cotton handkerchief bound around her head, strikingly revealed the bilious paleness of her ghastly face. A black circle surrounds her dim and hollow eyes, and blood oozes from her parched and chapped lips. Her mild and melancholy countenance, indicated that her character was destitute of strength and energy; that she was one of those irresolute beings who yield, without an effort, to the pressure of calamity. With a mind weak and inert, narrow in all her ideas, she was only preserved in the paths of virtue by the transcendent honesty of her husband. She loved her children and their father, but she had not sufficient firmness to restrain an incessant lamentation over their common misfortunes; and the lapidary, whose constant labor was the only subsistence of the family, was obliged frequently to resign his stone and file, in order to soothe the complaining and wretched invalid. Beneath a coarse covering of cotton cloth which protected his wife, the lapidary spread garments so old and tattered that the pawnbroker would have scorned them.

A movable oven, a stove and an earthen pot, with two

three cracked cups scattered here and there on the hearth; a tub, a washing-board, and a large bottle placed in a corner near the shattered door—continually shaken by the wind—constituted the entire furniture of this miserable household. On this deplorable picture flickered the candle, shaken by the wind that whistled through the crevices, lighting at times with a sudden and unearthly glare the faces of the sleepless wretches, and flashing from the diamonds and rubies upon the lapidary's table, a thousand brilliant and prismatic hues. With the fixed stare of imploring misery, the eyes of the six sleepless beings, from the idiot grandmother to the youngest infant, were all instinctively fixed upon the lapidary as their only hope and dependence. Upon seeing him thus unoccupied and bowed down with the pressure of labor, with characteristic selfishness, the mother thought of the children, the children of themselves, the idiot grandmother of nothing. Upraised in bed she sat, with her long and skinny arms, yellow as gambroon, crossed upon her bosom. Suddenly she softly arose, dragging after her the ragged covering. She advanced, like a mischievous child, to the bench of the lapidary, and, when near it, stretched toward the dim light her trembling hands. So thin were they, that the flame shone through them. Madeleine Morel watched from her bed every movement of the idiotic woman. The old grandmother continued to warm herself by the taper; bent her head low, and with a vacant grin and imbecile curiosity, observed the glitter of the diamonds and rubies which sparkled upon the table. Lost in her contemplation, she suffered her fingers to touch the flame, and screeched with a gutteral tone. The cry startled Morel, who suddenly raised his head.

He was forty years old, with an open countenance, which was mild and intelligent, though wrinkled and withered by suffering. A gray beard, many weeks old, covered the lower part of his face, which was marked with the small pox; early wrinkles were traced over his bald forehead, and his eyelids were red from incessant vigils. Like most workmen of weak constitution, forced by the nature of their occupation to maintain during the whole day a constant and sedentary position, his person was slightly deformed. From being continually compelled to lean over his bench, and to rest on his right side, that he might put his wheel in motion, the lapidary had become petrified, as it were, into a position in which he was forced to remain twelve or fifteen hours a day: he was round-shouldered, and lower on one side than on the other. Moreover, his right arm, constantly exercised in the management of his wheel, had acquired great muscular development; while the left arm and hand, constantly idle, and leaning on the table to hold the faces of the diamonds to the wheel, were reduced to a frightful state of emaciation and debility. His thin legs, wasted to nothing by an almost total deprivation of exercise, could scarcely sustain his body, attenuated as it was, whose whole strength and vitality seemed concentrated in the limb he used so incessantly.

"It is not for myself that I eat, but for strength to turn the wheel!" said Morel, with frightful resignation. Suddenly aroused, the lapidary stood before the idiot: "What is the matter? what are you doing here, mother?" said Morel; then in a lower tone, fearing to awaken his sleeping family, (for he thought they slumbered,) "Go to bed, mother: make no noise: Madeleine and the children are asleep."

"I am not asleep: I am trying to warm Adèle," said the eldest of the children.

"I am too hungry to sleep," said one of the boys; "I did not have the good luck to sup yesterday, as my brothers did, with Mademoiselle Rigolette."

"Poor children!" said Morel, overpowered; "I thought you slept, at least."

"I was unwilling to awake you, Morel," said Madeleine, "or I would have asked you for water. I am very thirsty—my fever is increasing."

"Directly; but first I must make your mother go to bed. Go; let the gems alone," said he to the old woman, who wished to take possession of a large ruby, the beauty of which attracted her. "Go to bed, mother," he repeated.

"Here! look here!" said the idiot, indicating a large stone, at which she snatched.

"You will drive me mad!" said Morel, speaking sternly to frighten the old woman, whose hand he gently pushed away.

"My God! my God! I am perishing with thirst," murmured Madeleine; "quick—give me water!"

"But what can I do? I cannot permit your mother to interfere with the gems; for she may lose another, as she did a year ago. Heaven knows what that stone has cost us already, and it may yet cost us more;" and the lapidary, with a melancholy air, carried his hand to his forehead. Then he added, speaking to one of his children: "Felix, hand your mother some water."

"No, I will wait: he will take cold," said Madeleine.

"It is not colder out than in bed," said the child, getting up.

"Now, be done with this," said Morel, in a threatening voice, to drive the idiot away; for she would not leave the bench, and wished to get possession of one of the gems.

"Mamma, the water in the pitcher is frozen," said Felix.

"Break the ice then."

"I cannot; it is too thick."

"Morel, break the ice in the pitcher," said Madeleine, in a feeble and impotent voice. "Since I have nothing else to drink, will you let me die of thirst?"

"Just Heaven! what a burden is laid upon me! What can I do? I have your mother in my arms," cried the unfortunate lapidary.

He could not compel her to yield, for the crone, who had become enraged at the resistance she met with, gave utterance to a kind of furious snarl.

"Call her," said Morel to his wife. "She sometimes will listen to you."

"Mother, go to bed; and I will give you a cup of coffee, of which you are so fond."

"Here! here!" cried the idiot, seeking again to possess herself of the ruby, at which she grasped earnestly.

Morel sought to push her away, but in vain.

"You know, Morel, that you can only get rid of her by frightening her with the stick," said Madeleine. "That is the only means to keep her quiet."

"I must do it; but foolish as she is, I am unwilling to threaten an old woman with a stick," said Morel. Then speaking in the severest tone to the idiot, who tried to bite him, and whom he held with one hand, said:

"I shall beat you, unless you go to bed directly."

These threats were vain.

He took a whip from his bench, and cracking it, said: "To bed, directly—to bed!"

At the sound of the whip, the old woman withdrew quietly from the bench; then halting, ground her teeth, and glanced angrily at the artisan.

"To bed—to bed!" repeated he, cracking his whip again.

The idiot went slowly to bed, shaking her fist at the lapidary.

Morel, wishing to put an end to this cruel scene, advanced very near her, and for the last time, made a loud noise with his whip, without however touching the woman, and repeated in a threatening manner:

"To bed at once."

The old woman in her fright, uttered fearful groans, threw herself on her bed, and coiled herself up in it like a dog, without however ceasing her mutterings.

The children were alarmed; and thinking that Morel had struck their grandmother, cried out in tears:

"Do not strike grandmama! do not strike her!"

It is impossible to portray the horror of this nightly scene, with all its mournful accompaniments—the supplicating cries of the children, the furious mutterings of the idiot, and the melancholy moans of the lapidary's wife.

CHAPTER VII. ..... THE DEBT.

MOREL had often participated in scenes as sad as the one we have just described. Yet he cried out, as he threw his stick on his bench in the depth of despair:

"What a life! what a life!"

"Is it my fault that my mother is an idiot?" said Madeleine, weeping.

"Is it mine?" asked Morel. "What do I ask of you? For you, day and night, I am killing myself with labor. I do not complain. As long as strength lasts, I will go on. But I am unable to be, at the same time, a laborer and the nurse of a mad-woman, an invalid wife, and of my children. No, Heaven is not just—is not just! it is too much misery for one man," said the lapidary, in a pitiable accent. And overcome, he sank on his stool, and leaned his head on his hands.

"Since they would not receive my mother at the hospital, because, as they say, 'she is not mad enough,' what can I do?" said Madeleine, in her languid, indolent and feeble voice. "Why torment yourself about what is unavoidable?"

"It is of no use," said the artisan; and dashed from his eyes a single tear which moistened them. "It is of no use; but when everything weighs on a single man, it is sometimes impossible to retain one's self-command."

"Oh, God! how thirsty I am! I shiver with cold; but yet the fever burns me."

"I will give you water."

Morel went to take the pitcher from under the roof. After having, with difficulty, broken the ice; he filled a cup with the half-frozen fluid, and approached the bed, when his wife reached out her eager hands. But after a moment's reflection, he said, "No, it will produce an increase of fever. It is too cold: it will do you harm."

"Will it! so much the better! Give it to me quickly," answered Madeleine, with bitterness; "it will soon finish me—and I shall no longer be a burden to you. You will then be obliged to nurse only a fool and the children. You will be rid of the invalid."

"Why do you speak thus, Madeleine? I do not deserve it," said Morel, sadly. "Do not distress me; I have hardly strength and reason enough now, to enable me to work. My head is not very strong, it cannot bear much; and then, what will become of you all? for you I speak. Were I alone, I should have no trouble to-morrow. Thank Heaven! the river runs for all the world."

"Poor Morel," said Madeleine, much moved; "I was wrong to speak so cruelly to you; to insinuate that you wished to be rid of me. Forgive me: my intention was good. But indeed, I am useless to you and my children! For ten months I have been in bed. God! how thirsty I am! I pray you, give me water."

"Directly: let me try to warm the cup with my hands."

"You are so kind, and I said such harsh things."

"You suffer, and that renders the temper irritable. Say to me anything you choose, except that you wish to leave me and this world."

"But of what use am I to you? What use are our children, but to overburden you with labor."

"True. On their account I am sometimes forced to work twenty hours a day; so that I have become deformed and crippled. Do you think that I love myself well enough to work as I do! Oh, no! life is not pleasant enough to tempt me to endure such labor—I would end it."

"So it is with me," said Madeleine; "but for the children, I would long ago have said, 'you have lived long enough, and your wife also: let us kindle a handful of charcoal, and afterward laugh at misery.' But the children! the children!"

"You see they are yet fit for something; they restrain us from self-murder," said Morel, with admirable naivette. "Come, drink, my wife; take small swallows, for it is yet very cold."

"Thank you, Morel." said Madeleine, drinking greedily.

"That is enough—enough."

"It was too cold; my shivering increases," said Madeleine, giving him the cup.

"Oh, Heaven! I told you so. Now your sufferings will increase."

"I shiver no more—I am too weak to shiver—I seem to be surrounded by an immense icicle: that is all."

Morel took off his jacket and placed it on his wife's feet, and remained with his arms naked. The unfortunate man wore no shirt.

"But you will be frozen, Morel."

"If I am cold, I will take my jacket again."

"Poor fellow! Yes, you are right: Heaven is unjust. Why are we so unhappy, while others——"

"All have their troubles. The great as well as the small; the rich as well as the poor."

"Yes: but the great have troubles, which do not dig into their bowels; which do not congeal them. And when I think, that for the value of one of those diamonds which you polish, we might have the means of living comfortably, we and our children, I grow angry. What is the use of those diamonds?"

"If we ask ourselves, what things are useful, and what are not, our inquiry will be a long one. You might as well ask, what use does that gentleman, whom Madam Pipelet calls the Commander, make of that room down stairs, rented and furnished, and to which he never comes! What benefit does he derive from his good bed and covering, since he sleeps elsewhere?"

"That is true: there is enough there to feed and clothe for a long time, such a family as ours, and Madam Pipelet makes there a fire every day to prevent his furniture from being spoiled by moisture—so much good fire lost, while we and our children are frozen! But you will say to that, we are not chattels, and that it won't injure us to be moist. Oh, the rich! Our lot is hard indeed!"

"Not harder that others, Madeleine. Do you not see, that rich people do not know what misery is? Happy they are born, happy they live and die; and why should they think of us! I tell you they know not privations themselves, and how should they form an idea of those of others! Are they hungry? they are happy for it. A good appetite is a luxury to them; they can dine more pleasantly. Are they cold? so much the better—they call it a fine frost—when they walk out, they can return to the side of a bright fire, which they enjoy the more on account of the cold. They do not pity us, because cold and hunger are the causes of their pleasures. They do not know what misery is, and in their situation, we would act as they do."

"The poor are better than the rich, for they assist each other. This good little Mademoiselle Rigolette, who has so often sat up with me and the children, when we were ill, carried out yesterday, Jerome and Peter to sup with her; and her supper is not much, but a glass of milk and a piece of bread. At her age the appetite is good, and she must have endured great privation. Poor girl! Yes, she is very good, and why? Because she has known what trouble is; and as I always say, if the rich were only acquainted with misery, they would be kinder to the poor."

"And the lady who came in so fluttering a manner on the day before yesterday, to ask if we were in need of anything; she knows what misfortune is, yet she did not return?"

"She will return, perhaps; for, in spite of her frightened appearance, she seemed kind and gentle."

"Oh! with you, every one who is rich is good. You will say, that rich people are made out of a different clay from the poor!"

"I do not say that," answered Morel, mildly; "on the contrary, I say they have their faults, and we have ours. The worst of it is, they do not know the misery of the poor; and what increases the evil is, that there are numerous agents to discover rogues who commit crimes; but there are none to discover honest laborers, compelled to support a large family, reduced to the most extreme poverty, and who, for the want of seasonable assistance, fall into the power of temptation. It is certainly good to punish evil, but it would be better to prevent it. A man may have been honest up to the age of fifty, but extreme poverty and famine may lead him into crime, and another good man is added to the rogues. If they had only known—but what good will it do to think of all this? Such is the world. I am poor and desperate, and I asked in this manner; were I rich, I might be speaking about festivals and pleasures. Well! my poor wife, how do you feel now?"

"Oh, very much the same! I have no feeling in my limbs. But you tremble also; take back your jacket, I beg of you, and blow out the candle, for it is wasting itself away."

And now a sickly light, with difficulty penetrating the snow, which closed up the panes of the window, began to throw its feeble rays through the room, and rendered its appearance yet more frightful. The darkness of night had concealed some of its horrors.

After a silence of some moments, Madeleine said, "When will Madam Mathieu return for her diamonds, on which you are engaged?"

"This morning. I have only the face of a false stone to polish."

"A false stone! you, who in spite of what is believed in this house, cut only genuine ones."

"How! do you not know? But it is right enough; when Madam Mathieu was here the other day, you slept. She has given me ten false stones, ten German pebbles, to polish to exactly the size and shape of the genuine ones. She brought with them those lying there with the rubies. I have never seen diamonds of finer water than these ten stones are: they are certainly worth more than sixty thousand francs."

"Why then does she wish the imitation stones made!"

"A lady to whom they belong—a duchess, I believe—wishes Mr. Baudoin, the jeweller, to sell her ornaments, and substitute for them others of false stones. Madam Mathieu, Mr. Baudoin's brokeress of jewels, told me this when she brought the true stones to me, in order that I should give the false ones the same shape and form. Madam Mathieu has confided a similar task to four other lapidaries, for there are forty or fifty stones to cut. I could not do all the work. They must be ready this morning, in order to give Mr. Baudoin time to set the false stones. Madam Mathieu says, that ladies often thus secretly replace their gems with German pebbles."

"You see, now, that false stones look as well as true ones; and the fine ladies who use them but to deck themselves, would never think of sacrificing a diamond to the rescue of such wretches as we are, from death by starvation."

"My poor wife, be reasonable. Suffering makes you unjust. Who in the world knows that we, the Morel's, are so unhappy?"

"What a man! what a man! Were they to tear you in pieces, you would not ask for mercy."

Morel elevated his shoulders with an expression of compassion.

"What will Madam Mathieu owe you this morning?"

"Nothing. I am twenty francs behindhand with her."

"Nothing! and we spent on the day before yesterday our last twenty sous!"

"Yes," said Morel, with a downcast air. "And what shall we do?"

"I do not know."

"And the baker will not trust us?"

"No; and yesterday I borrowed a loaf from Madam Pipelet."

"Mother Burette will lend us nothing?"

"Lend us anything! Now that she has in pawn all of our goods, what will she lend on? On our children?" said Morel, with bitterness.

"But my mother, the children, and you, have eaten nothing since yesterday, but a pound and a half of bread between you all. You will die with hunger. It is your own fault. You would not this year have my name entered at the charity office."

"The names only of the poor who have furniture are inscribed there; and we no longer have any. They look upon us as boarders. And then I would have been obliged to go and return twenty times to and from the bureau, since we have no certificates, and that would cost more time than the relief is worth."

"But what shall we do, then?"

"Perhaps the lady who was here on the day before yesterday, will not forget us."

"Yes, you may depend upon her. But Madam Mathieu perhaps will lend you a hundred sous; for ten years you have been in her employment. She will not leave you in such a situation: an honest workman, burdened with a family."

"I do not think she can lend us anything. She did all she could, in advancing us, by little and little, those five hundred francs. It is a large sum for her, although she is a diamond brokeress, and sometimes has the value of fifty thousand francs in her pocket: for all that, she is not rich. When she makes a hundred francs a month she is well satisfied, for she has charges resting on her; two nieces to educate. A hundred sous to her is as much as a hundred sous to us. Sometimes she is without money, as you well know. Having already advanced much to me, she cannot take the bread out of her own mouth, and the mouths of her family."

"See what it is to work for brokers instead of wealthy jewellers, who are sometimes more generous; but you always allow yourself to be fleeced, and it is your own fault."

"My fault!" cried the unfortunate man, exasperated by this absurd reproach; "is not your mother the cause of all of our misery! If we had not been forced to pay for the diamond which she lost, we would have been comfortable; we would have had the value of my day's labor; we would have the eleven hundred francs which we have drawn from the savings bank, to join to the thirteen hundred which we borrowed from that Jacques Ferrand—whom may God curse!"

"You insist, then, on asking him for nothing? He is so avaricious, that I fear it would be of no use if you did; but make the attempt, at all events."

"Him! ask him for anything? I had rather be burned by a slow fire! Never mention that man's name to me again, or you will drive me mad." As he said these words, the countenance of the lapidary, usually mild and resigned, assumed an expression of dark energy. His pale face became slightly colored. He rose quickly from the bed upon which he had seated himself, and walked hastily up and down the garret. In spite of his worn and deformed appearance, the attitude and countenance of the man were lit up with a noble indignation. "I am not depraved," cried he: "never in my life have I injured any one; but, do you understand? I wish this notary* as much injury as he has done me." Then, placing his hand on his forehead, he murmured in a pitiable voice: "My God! why must a miserable mischance, which I have not merited, deliver me and mine, bound hand and foot, to that hypocrite? Must he have the right to make use of his wealth to spread infamy and desolation wherever he chooses?"

"That is right," said Madeleine; "unchain yourself against him: you will be very comfortable when he shall have put you in prison, as he can any day do for this note of thirteen hundred francs, for which, three months ago, he obtained a judgment against you. He holds you, as it were, like a bird at the end of a string. I, too, hate this notary; but since we are in his power, we must——"

"Suffer him to ruin our daughter!" cried the lapidary, in a voice of thunder.

"Good Heaven! hush! the children are awake, and hear you."

"Bah! so much the better," said Morel, with an awful irony; "it will be a good example for our two little daughters—a good preparation for them. He has but some day to take a fancy to them too. Are we not dependent on him, as you always say? Do repeat again, that it is in his power to put me in prison! Come, speak without disguise: we must give up our daughter to him, must we not?" The miserable man ended his imprecation in violent sobs; for the good and honest nature of the artist could not long endure this strain of sarcasm. "Oh, my children!" cried he, melting into tears; "my poor children! My Louise! my good, my beautiful Louise! too lovely—too beautiful! that is the cause of all our troubles: had she not been so beautiful, that man would have never proposed to lend me money. I am laborious and honest, and the jeweller would have given me time to pay for the lost diamond. I should have then been under no obligations to that monster, and he would not endeavor to profit by the services which he has rendered us to ruin our daughter. I would not have left her one day in his house, unless compelled to do so by the fact, that I was absolutely in his power. Oh, poverty! poverty! what outrages, what sufferings thou compellest us to endure!"

"But what could be done? 'If you leave my house,' said he to Louise, 'I will send your father to prison.'"

"Yes; he uses language toward her which would shame the vilest creature!"

"If that were all, we could bear it; but if she leaves the notary, he will have you arrested; and then, while you are in prison, what will become of me, left alone with my mother and the children? Even if Louise earned twenty francs in some other place, how would that suffice for the support of six persons?"

"Yes; in order to sustain life, we have to expose Louise to a wretched degradation!"

"You always exaggerate. The notary takes some liberties, it is true, for she has told us so; but then we have the highest confidence in her virtue and honesty."

"Oh, yes, she is honest, active, and good. When the diamond was lost, and we were left in so much trouble, she wished to enter into service so as not to burden us. I told you at that time, how grievous it would be for me to see her a menial, ill-treated and humbled; she who is naturally so proud and haughty, that you remember the name we gave her—for we used to joke *then:* we called her the princess, because we said she had so much neatness and tact, that she could make our garret look like a palace. Dear child! it would be a luxury to have her with us, even if I have to labor all night for her support. Indeed, when I saw her pleasant, rosy face, and her pretty black eyes, as she was seated before me there close to my bench, and I heard her voice raised in song, my labors always appeared light to me. Even your mother would do anything she told her; for how could one look into her face and refuse her anything? And how she ministered to your relief! how she aided and amused you! And her brothers and sisters—what excellent care she took of them! for she found time for everything. Alas! all our happiness fled when Louise left the house."

"Do not remind me of it, Morel; you break my heart," said Madeleine, shedding copious tears.

"And when I think of that, perhaps the old monster——you see how the thought maddens me!—I have a mind to go and kill him, and kill myself afterward."

"What then would become of us, pray? You are again exaggerating. The notary, I presume, is only joking. He goes to church every Sunday: he associates with the priests. Many people say that it is more safe to deposite money with him than in the savings bank."

"What does that prove, but that he is rich and a hypocrite? I know very well that Louise is honest, but then she loves us as parents are seldom loved; her heart bleeds when she thinks, that without me you would starve. If the notary should threaten to send me to prison, the poor creature may——Oh, my head! my head! I am losing my reason: it will drive me crazy!"

"But sure, if there was any reason for fear, the notary would have treated her kindly—would have given her money and presents; and as she never keeps anything for herself, she would have given them all to us."

"Keep your peace! I cannot understand how you can entertain such an idea. Louise accept a present! Louise! from *him!*"

"Not for herself, but for us."

"Hold your tongue—hold your tongue! you make me shudder! I do not know what would have become of you, and the children also, with such reasoning."

"What have I said that is wrong?"

"Nothing."

"Well, then, why do you fear that——"

* The reader will perhaps remember, that Fleur de Marie, when very young, had been confided to this notary, and that his housekeeper gave the child to Chouette, who was to nurture her on condition of receiving 1000 francs.

The lapidary interrupted his wife with impatience: "I? because I observe, that every time Louise comes here and kisses me, she blushes."

"'Tis her pleasure at seeing you."

"Or her shame. She becomes more and more sad every day."

"Because she sees us more and more miserable. When I speak to her about the notary, she says that 'he does not threaten her any more with sending you to prison.'"

"Yes; but why does he not continue to threaten her with sending me to prison? that is the question. She says nothing about it, but she blushes when kissing me. It would be very cruel for a master, on whom an honest girl depends for a livelihood, to threaten to expel her, and give such a poor account of her as to prevent her from securing a situation anywhere else; but to threaten to send me to prison unless she consents to her own shame—that is a thousand times more criminal, knowing, as he does, that my family are entirely dependent upon me for a living."

"Only think! one single diamond there on your table, would suffice—would suffice to pay the notary, to take her out of his hands, and keep her with us," said Madeleine, deliberately.

"What good will it do to repeat that a hundred times? Certainly, were I rich, I should not be poor; there is no denying that," continued Morel, with impatience.

Honesty was so natural to this man—so organic, if we may employ the term—that the idea did not enter his mind, that his wife, overwhelmed with misery, could entertain any thought of tempting his irreproachable integrity.

He now said, with bitterness: "We must be resigned. Happy are those parents, who can keep their children near them, and protect them from snares. But who protects the daughter of a poor man? Nobody! If she is old enough to earn anything, she starts in the morning for her shop, and returns at night; in the mean time, the father and mother toil and labor. Time is their only wealth. Bread is so dear, that they cannot waste a moment upon the conduct of their children; and their parents are blamed if any misfortune befalls them, as if they had time to instruct them at home, or watch over them abroad. Privations of food and raiment are nothing, compared with the sorrow of separating parent and child. To the poor, domestic happiness is peculiarly salutary and consoling; and yet, hardly have my children grown to an age of reason, when they are torn from me."

At this moment, a loud knock was heard at the door of the garret.

CHAPTER VIII. ..... THE JUDGMENT.

The lapidary left his seat in astonishment, and went to open the door. Two men entered the attic. One of them was a tall and thin man, with a vulgar pimpled face, which was almost concealed by the exuberance of his whiskers, the black hairs of which were interspersed with some gray ones. He held in his hand a loaded cane, and wore on his head an ill-shaped hat. His long green frock-coat, covered with mud, was buttoned up close to the throat, leaving exposed a thin, scarred, long neck, resembling a vulture's. He bore the name of Malicorne. His companion was short and thick, and dressed with an air of mock gentility; buttons of imitation diamonds closed his shirt, of doubtful cleanliness; and a long gold chain wound over a faded vest, partly hid by a *sack*, which he wore. This one rejoiced in the name of Bourdin.

"Why, how you smell! there must be poverty and death here," said Malicorne, stepping over the threshold.

"True, true!" said Bourdin; "not much musk here: low customers," added he, with a gesture of disgust and contempt, approaching the lapidary, who was looking at him with great surprise and indignation. Through the half-open door, could be discovered the cunning, mischievous monkey-face of Tortillard, who, having slyly followed the strangers, was watching and listening with eager attention."

"What do you want?" said the lapidary, roughly; provoked at the insolence of the two intruders.

"Jerome Morel," answered Bourdin.

"I am the man."

"A lapidary?"

"Yes."

"Are you sincere?"

"Once more, I am the man. Why do you keep me in suspense? Explain your business, or leave the room."

"If you call that politeness, I am much obliged to you. Look here, Malicorne," said one of the men, addressing his companion; "there is not much to be found here; it don't look much like the Viscount de Saint Remy's."

"I know it. Wherever there is a good job, we always find the doors locked, as we did in rue Chaillot: the bird had flown the day before, too proud to be caught. No danger of such vermin as these, flying from their holes."

"To be sure: they wish to be put in a cage, in order to get some pap. The wolf must be a good-natured sort of a fellow; this arrest will cost him more than it comes too; but that's his look out."

"If you were not drunk, as you appear to be, I would punish your insolence. Leave the room immediately!"

"Ha, ha! you are a curious old covey;" alluding to the attenuated frame of the lapidary. "I say, Malicorne, the fellow has the impudence to call this a room; a miserable kennel, in which I wouldn't keep my dog."

"Good Heaven!" said Madeleine, so terrified by this unexpected intrusion, that she had not been able to speak a word; "shout for help, take care of your diamonds, they may be robbers."

The two strangers, with such unprepossessing exteriors, gradually drew near to the work-bench of the lapidary, during the above scene; where the precious stones were exposed. Morel, fearing some evil design, ran to the table, and protected with his hands the treasures he had in charge.

Tortillard, who was on the alert, observed the movements of the lapidary, and had heard the words of Madeleine, and said to himself:

"Hurrah! they said he worked in false stones: but if these stones were worthless, he would not fear being robbed; that's a great discovery. Mother Mathieu, who comes after them, must be a brokeress in real jewels, and carry them with her in her basket. I will tell it to Chouette—Chouette—ette—ette," said, or rather sung, Tortillard, in his usual manner.

"I will call for the guard, if you do not leave my room," said Morel.

The children, frightened at the scene, commenced crying; the old idiot screamed in chorus.

"If any one has a right to call for the guard, it is ourselves; do you hear, Mr. Wambleerop?" said Bourdin.

"For the guard will help us to take care of you, if you resist," said Malicorne; "we have no justice of the peace with us, I admit, but if you are anxious for his society, we will serve one up to you, fresh and hot from his nest; Bourdin will go after him."

"Do you come to take me to prison?" exclaimed Morel, struck with terror.

"Yes; to Clichy."

"To Clichy?" repeated the artisan, with wandering looks.

"This fellow must have a hard head," said Malicorne to his companion.

"To prison for debt, if you like that better," said Bourdin.

"You? you? How? the notary? Good Heaven!" said Morel, in broken exclamations, and falling back upon his bench.

"It must be the note of Louise's master, Morel. We are lost! lost!" exclaimed Madeleine, in a fear-struck voice.

"Here is the judgment," said Malicorne, drawing from his pocket-book a stamped paper.

After having hummed over, as usual, the formal portion of the document in an unintelligible manner, he pronounced distinctly the important clause conveying the whole import to the unhappy lapidary:

"*Judging in the last instance, the tribunal condemns the said Jerome Morel, to pay the aforesaid Jacques Ferrand, notary, in Paris, by every legal means, and even by his body, the sum of thirteen hundred francs, with interest, from the day of protest, and condemns him also to pay the costs.*

"*Done and judged, Paris, Sept. 13th,* 1838."

"And Louise, Louise," said the lapidary, who did not seem to hear the legal lingo; "where is she? has she left the notary? Since he sends me to prison, what has become of Louise?"

"Who do you mean by Louise?" said Bourdin.

"Let him alone," said Malicorne, coarsely; "do you not see that he is crazy? Come along," continued he approaching Morel; "right and left, forward march: let us move. I must take the fresh air; 'tis a perfect pestilence here."

"Do not go, Morel: defend yourself," said Madeleine, in a wandering manner. "Kill the wretches! what a coward you are! Will you let them take you away? will you abandon us!"

"Make yourself perfectly at home, madam," said Bourdin, with a sarcastic sneer; "but if your husband raises his hand, I will knock him down."

Wholly engrossed with his fears respecting Louise, Morel heard not a word of what was going on around him; but suddenly a flash of bitter joy lighted his face, and he exclaimed:

"Louise must have left the house of the notary, and I shall

go to prison contented!" but casting his glance around, added: "My wife, my mother, and my other children! who will give them food? People will not trust me with precious stones to work upon in prison: they will think that some dishonesty has sent me there. Is it, then, the death of my family—the death of all of us—that the notary wants?"

"Once, twice—shall we end this?" said Bourdin. "It is a great bore! Will you dress yourself and march?"

"My good sir, pardon me for what I said a moment since. You certainly will not have the cruelty to take my husband away? What will become of me, and of my five children, and my mother who is an idiot? Do you not see her there, seated on the bed? She is crazy, my good sirs. She is crazy."

"What! that old shorn woman?"

"Hallo! Sure enough, she is shaved," said Malicorne; "I thought she had on a white nightcap."

"My children, throw yourselves upon your knees before the good gentlemen!" exclaimed Madeleine, anxious, as a *dernier resort*, to touch the heart of the officers. "Entreat them not to take away your poor father—your sole support."

In spite of the orders of their mother, the children were too frightened to leave their bed, but remained there, in tears.

At the unusual noise, and the sight of men to whom she was unfamiliar, the old idiot commenced throwing herself against the wall, and uttering loud roars.

Morel was entirely abstracted from all that took place around him. The blow was so unexpected and terrible—the consequences which might result from his arrest so frightful, that he could not believe in its reality. Already weakened by privations of every kind, his strength now seemed entirely to desert him. He sat, pale and aghast, upon his seat, bent up double, his arms hanging, his head inclined upon his breast.

"Look here! Come, now. Thunder and Mars! do you think that we are at a wedding? Come, march, or I shall seize hold of you."

The officer laid his hands upon Morel's shoulder, and shook him violently.

The threat and the gesture, inspired the children with great alarm. The three little children emerged almost naked from their straw, and came in tears, throwing themselves at the feet of the officers, and joining their hands, cried out in a heart-moving voice:

"Pardon! pardon! do not kill our father!"

At the sight of the three miserable children shaking with cold and fear, Bourdin, in spite of his natural cruelty, and his familiarity with similar scenes, was perceptibly touched. His merciless comrade twitched his leg from the children, who held it in a supplicating manner, and said: "Clear out, you little urchins: what a rascally profession ours would be, if we always had to deal with such beggars!"

A terrible episode increased the horrors of this awful scene.

The eldest of the girls, who had remained on the straw with her sick sister, suddenly exclaimed: "Mamma! mamma! I do not know what is the matter with Adèle; she is quite cold; she stares at me with her eyes stretched open, but will not speak."

The poor consumptive child had gently expired without a groan, with her eyes fixed upon the sister she had loved so tenderly!

It is impossible to describe the cry that broke from the lapidary's wife, as the heart-rending truth dawned upon her. It was a terrifying and convulsive shriek, as if torn from the depths of her heart.

"My sister looks as if she were dead. I am afraid of her," said the child, crawling out of her bed, and hastening, in a bewildered manner, to throw herself in her mother's arms. The latter, forgetting for a moment, that her paralyzed limbs could not support her, suddenly attempted to rise and hasten to her dead child; but her powers failing, she fell upon the floor uttering a wail of despair. The cry found an echo in Morel's heart, and roused him from his stupor. With one leap, he rushed to the straw bed, and seized the cold and lifeless child.

She was dead. Though her sickness, brought on by misery, was mortal, the intensity of the cold had hastened her death. Her poor little limbs were already stiff.

CHAPTER IX..... LOUISE.

MOREL, with his hair on end from despair and affright, remained fixed and immovable. Holding his dead child in his arms, he looked at her with a searching, tearless, and inflamed eye.

"Morel! Morel! give me Adèle!" exclaimed the wretched mother, stretching forth her arms toward her husband. "It cannot be true! No, no! she is not dead! I am going to make her warm!"

The curiosity, even of the idiot, was excited by the eagerness of the two officers in approaching the lapidary, who could not tear himself from the corpse of his child. The old woman restrained her howling, arose from her couch, and advanced slowly—thrust her blank, idiotic face, above Morel's shoulder, and for a few minutes the eyes of the grandmother were fixed upon the corpse of her grand-daughter. The features of the maniac retained their habitual expression of wild stupidity. After a moment's interval, she uttered a groan, as deep and hollow as that of a famished beast. Then returning to her couch, she flung herself upon it, crying out: "Hungry! hungry!"

"You see, gentlemen, a poor little girl four years old. Adèle is her name. As late as last evening I kissed her cheek; and this morning beheld her! You will say to me that I have one less to support, and that it is good luck, will you not?" said the artisan, in a wild manner. His reason began to totter under so many reiterated blows.

"Morel, I want my daughter! I want her!" exclaimed Madeleine.

"It is true! it is true! Each one in his turn," replied the lapidary; and he went to deposite the child in the arms of his wife. He buried his face in his hands, lifted up his voice, and wept aloud.

Madeleine, no less bewildered than her husband, thrust in the straw of her own bed the corpse of her daughter, seeming to gloat over it, with eyes radiant with a savage jealousy; while the other children, on their knees by the side of the couch, awoke the echoes of the frightful abode with their sobs and wailing. The bailiffs, at first moved by this unexpected visitation of death, soon relapsed into their habitual hardihood.

"Look here!" said Malicorne to the lapidary. "Your child is dead. It is a misfortune. We are all mortal, and cannot help it. You must come with us; we have another fellow to pounce upon, for game is quite plenty to-day."

Morel did not hear the man.

Completely absorbed by his gloomy thoughts, the poor workman muttered to himself in a deep and broken voice:

"We must bury our poor little one. We must sit up with her here, until they come and take her away, to bury her in the ground. Bury her! who will trust us? 'Twill only take a very small coffin for a child four years old. It cannot cost much. No bearse will be needed, for it can be carried under the arm. Ha! ha! ha! how lucky I am to-night!" added he, with a frenzied laugh. "She might have died at the age of eighteen—at Louise's age. A large coffin would cost more!"

"I say! Look here! this chap I am afraid is getting crazy," said Bourdin to Malicorne; "just look at his eyes! He is frightful. Hurrah for another! Here is one old idiot already roaring with hunger. What a family! We must however close up the business, although the arrest of this beggar is only rated at seventy-six francs, seventy-five centimes—we will swell the costs, of course, to two hundred and forty, or two hundred and fifty francs. It is the wolf who pays."

"Say rather, who advances the money; for this rogue here must pay the fiddlers, since it is he who is going to dance."

"What! this fellow get enough to pay his creditor? Twenty-five hundred—principal, interest and cost? It will be warm enough then!"

"It is cold enough now, for it freezes my fingers," said the officer, blowing upon them. "Let's finish the business; let's pack up and be off. He will cry all along the road. Is it our fault that his child is dead?"

"When people are so poor they should have no children."

"'Twill be a lesson to him," added Malicorne. Then tapping on Morel's shoulder, said: "Come, come, comrade; we have no time to wait. Since you cannot pay, you must go to prison."

"To prison! Mr. Morel!" said a clear ringing voice, and a young brunette, with a cheek rosy and radiant with health, without anything on her head, quickly entered the garret.

"Oh, Mademoiselle Rigolette!" said one of the children, weeping; "you who are so good, save papa. They wish to take him to prison; and our little sister is dead."

"Adele dead!" said the young woman, with her large black eyes filling with tears. "Your father to prison! that must not be;" and motionless near the entrance of the garret, she looked by turns at the lapidary, his wife, and the officers.

Bourdin now approached Rigolette, and said:

"Here, my pretty girl, as you seem to have some nerve, try to make this old man listen to reason. His daughter has just died, and he must go with us to Clichy—we are going to put him in prison for debt. We are officers."

"Can it be true?" cried the young girl.

"Very true. The mother keeps the body of the child in bed with her, and will not suffer it to be removed; she will attend to nothing else. The father should improve the opportunity to steal away from her."

"Holy Virgin!" cried Rigolette; "what can I do?"

"Pay the debt or hurry him off to prison; that's what you can do. Have you got two or three thousand francs to lend them?" asked Malicorne, with an ironical tone. "If you have, go to your strong box and roll out the nuts; we ask for nothing better."

"You must be miserable wretches, if you have got nothing to laugh at but the imprisonment of a poor man, and the death of his child."

"Well, then, without jesting: since you wish to be of use, try to prevent his wife from seeing us carry away her husband. You will save both of them from a wretched quarter of an hour."

The advice, though brutal, was good; and Rigolette approached Madeleine, who, overwhelmed with grief, and half deranged with despair, did not observe the young girl, who knelt with the little flock that called Madeleine mother, by the side of the wretched bed.

Morel only recovered his consciousness to fall into the most agonizing reflections. But when his reason was entirely restored, he was able to realize the full horror of his situation. Convinced that the heart of the notary could be reached by no emotion of pity or remorse, and that the officers only acted in the discharge of imperious duty, he surrendered himself with resignation into their hands.

"Come," said Bourdin; "now at least, we are ready to start."

"I cannot leave these diamonds here, with my wife, who is almost deranged," said Morel, showing the diamonds, which were scattered on his bench. "The woman for whom I work, will come this morning, or during the day, for them; they are very valuable. I beg of you to let me remain until to-morrow, that I may restore the diamonds to their owner."

"Excellent!" said Tortillard, who remained outside, listening. "Excellent! Chouette shall know this."

"Impossible!" replied the bailiff; "we must finish this affair at once."

"But I cannot leave these diamonds here, exposed."

"Take them with you. We have a carriage below, and we will drive to the house of the woman who employs you; and if she is not at home, you can deposit the gems with the keeper of Clichy. They will be as safe there as in a bank. Make haste, and we will be off before your wife and children perceive it."

"I entreat you to let me remain until to-morrow, to bury my child!" said Morel, in a voice whose suppliant tone trembled, as the tears started from his eyes.

"No, no! we cannot," said Malicorne; "we have already been here more than an hour, and the funeral of your child would only make you more wamble-cropped."

"Ah! yes, indeed! it would make me sad," said Morel, bitterly; "you seem to be very fearful of making people unhappy, all of a sudden. But I ask time only for one word."

"Well: be devilish quick about it," said Malicorne, with great impatience.

"When were you ordered to arrest me?"

"Judgment was rendered four months ago; but it was on yesterday that the clerk received orders from the notary to issue an execution."

"Was it as late as yesterday?"

"Certainly. Come, bundle up, and let's be off."

"Yesterday," said the lapidary, musing, and taking from his bench a pasteboard box, filled with cotton, in which he deposited the gems. "Yesterday, Louise was not here: I wonder what can have become of her; but I shall have time enough to think about that in prison."

"Quick, quick! make up your bundle, and dress yourself."

"I have none to make," said Morel; "and nothing but these diamonds to take with me, and place in the hands of the keeper."

"Dress yourself, then."

"I have no other clothes but these."

"I hope you are not going out in those rags."

"You will doubtless be ashamed of your companion," said Morel, with a bitter tone.

"No: because we are going in a carriage," answered Malicorne.

"Mamma is speaking to you," said one of the children, to their father.

"Listen," murmured Morel, hastily, to one of the officers. "Be not inhuman; grant me one final favor. I have not the courage to bid adieu to my wife and children—'t would break my heart; if they see you removing me they will run after me. I must avoid that. I beg of you to say to me, in a loud tone, 'that you will return in three or four days;' and then pretend to leave me. Wait for me at the foot of the stairs, below; I will join you in five minutes, and thus I shall be spared the parting scene. I will make no attempt to escape; but if I was compelled to say 'good-by,' to my wife, and kiss my children, I should lose my senses. I nearly lost them just now."

"You are found out: you wish to escape; to trick us, you old scamp," said Malicorne.

"By all that is sacred, I do not," said Morel, with melancholy indignation.

"I do not believe that he intends to gammon us," said Bourdin, in a low voice to his companion. "Let us grant his request: if we do not, we shall never get out of this hole. Besides, I will remain outside upon the landing; there is no other egress from the garret, and he cannot escape."

"Well, well: may the devil seize him! What a kennel! what a kennel!" said the other. Then, turning to Morel, in a low voice said, "We will wait for you on the fourth floor. Play your own game and be quick about it."

"I thank you," said Morel.

"Good day, good day," said Bourdin to the artisan, in a loud voice, and with a significant air; "since you promise to pay, we will leave you; but we shall return in five or six days, and you must have the cash then."

"Yes, sirs; I hope I shall be able to pay you."

The officers now withdrew.

Tortillard, afraid of being discovered, had left the stairway the very moment that the officers came out of the garret.

"Madam Morel, do you hear?" said Rigolette, addressing the wife of the lapidary, in order to arouse her, if possible, from her frightful apathy; "the two men have gone and left your husband."

"Mamma, do you hear? They will not take papa away," said the eldest of the boys.

"Morel, listen to me," murmured Madeleine, entirely delirious; "take one of those large diamonds—it will never be missed—and we shall be saved: our little Adèle will be no longer cold as she is now; she will be dead no longer."

Improving a moment when none of his family observed him, the lapidary went stealthily out. The officers were waiting for him on the landing.

From this platform opened also the door of a store-room, which was in part a continuation of the garret of the Morels, in which Mr. Pipelet kept his supplies of leather. It was here that, as the worthy porter said, he kept his "opera-box;" because, by means of a hole between the lath, he was sometimes the spectator of the sad scenes which took place in the room of the Morels. The officer observed the door of the store-room, and conjectured that his prisoner expected to escape through it, or conceal himself within.

"Let us march, my ugly customer," said he, placing his foot upon the first step of the staircase, and motioning to the lapidary to follow him.

"One minute more, if you please," said Morel. He knelt upon the bricks, and through one of the cracks of the door, cast a last look upon his family, clasped his hands, and said in a low voice and melancholy tone, while the warm tears rolled down his cheeks:

"Adieu, my poor children! My poor wife, farewell!"

"Be done with your antics," said Bourdin, roughly. "Malicorne is right. What a worm! what a caterpillar!"

Morel arose, and was about to follow the officer, when words were heard upon the stairway:

"My father! my father!"

"Louise!" cried the lapidary, lifting his hands to heaven; "I may then embrace thee before I go."

"Thank God! thank God! I am yet in time," said the voice below.

"Be calm, be quiet, my child," said a third, wheezing, crusty and panting voice, from a still lower depth; "I will place myself in ambuscade here, in the alley, if it is necessary; we three, my broom, myself and my old beloved; and the beggars shall not leave the house until you have spoken with them—the rascals!"

No one could mistake the peculiar voice of Madam Pipelet, who, less active than Louise, slowly followed her.

Within a few minutes, the daughter of the lapidary was clasped in the arms of her father.

"Is it thou, Louise? my good Louise!" said Morel, weeping. "But how pale you are! what ails you?"

"Nothing, nothing," said Louise, in a stammering tone: "I ran very fast—here is money."

"How!"

"You are free!".

"You knew, then?"

"Yes, yes. Hold, sir: here is the money," said the young girl, giving a rouleau of gold to Malicorne.

"But this money, Louise—this money?"

"You shall know all in a moment; but now, I beg of you, be calm, and come in and console my mother."

"No, no; tell me at once!" said Morel, placing himself before the door—the death of his little daughter, of which sad event Louise had not heard, occurring to his mind—"wait, I must speak with you: this money? this money, Louise?"

"Stop!" said Malicorne, as he finished counting the golden coins, which he pocketed. "Sixty-four, sixty-five; that makes thirteen hundred francs. Is that all you have, my little mother?"

"You do not owe but thirteen hundred francs?" said Louise, astonished, and addressing Morel.

"That is all," said Morel.

"Wait! wait!" exclaimed the bailiff. "The note was for thirteen hundred francs, and the note is paid; but, adding the costs for the judgment and the execution, and you still owe eleven hundred and forty francs."

"Just Heaven!" cried Louise; "I thought that it was only thirteen hundred francs. But, sir, soon, very soon, we will pay you the rest. This is a great deal on account; is it not, papa?"

"Away with you! soon, very soon. Bring what remains due to the jailer, and he will release your father."

"Will you have the heart to carry him away?"

"At once. What you have paid is on account: when you have paid the rest, he will be free. Come, Bourdin, be quick."

"Mercy! mercy!" cried Louise.

"What a bore! what a bore! The nonsense is about commencing again: it is enough to make one sweat on a winter's day," said the officer roughly. Then advancing to Morel, he said: "If you do not come at once, I shall seize you by the collar, and march you down in double quick time. It is becoming too disgusting."

"Oh! my poor father! my poor father! I thought I had saved you," said Louise, overpowered.

"No, no! God is not just!" cried the lapidary, in a desperate voice, and stamping with rage.

"God is just! he always pities the honest in their misery," said a gentle and quivering voice; and Rodolphe appeared at the door of the little nook, where, unseen, he had beheld many of the scenes which we have described.

He was pale, and greatly affected.

The officers drew back at his unexpected appearance, and Morel and his daughter surveyed this newcomer with great astonishment.

Taking from his waistcoat pocket a little roll of bank notes, Rodolphe gave three of them to Malicorne, and said: "Here are twenty-five hundred francs: give back to the young girl the gold she gave you."

With redoubled astonishment, the officer hesitatingly took the notes, examined them in every manner, turned them over and over, and finally placed them in his pocket. His vulgarity returning, as his surprise mingled with fear diminished, he measured Rodolphe with his eye, and said:

"Your notes are good; but how came you by such a sum? Does it really belong to you?" he added.

Rodolphe was very plainly dressed, and covered with dust, for which he was indebted to his sojourn in Mr. Pipelet's storeroom.

"I told you to return the gold to the young girl," replied Rodolphe, in a short and angry tone.

"*I* told you! and who are you, to put on such airs?" cried the officer, advancing toward Rodolphe in a menacing manner.

"The gold! the gold!" cried the Prince, seizing Malicorne at the same time so violently by the wrist, that he bent beneath his iron grasp.

"Let me go! you hurt me!" cried the officer.

"Give up the gold, then—you are paid—and take yourself off without insolence, or I will hurl you down the staircase."

"Well, there's the gold," said Malicorne, giving back the money to the young girl; "but do not abuse me because you are stronger than I."

"That's true. Pray, who are you, with your consequential manner?" said Bourdin, sheltering himself behind his companion; "who are you?"

"Do you ask who that is, you ugly blockhead? Why, that is my tenant—my king of tenants, you foul-mouthed villains, you!" cried Madam Pipelet, who at last made her appearance, with her everlasting wig, *à la Titus*. The portière held in her hand an earthen bowl filled with smoking soup, which she was charitably taking to the Morels.

"What does this old pole-cat want?" said Bourdin.

"If you utter any insinuations against me, I will spring at you and bite you," cried Madam Pipelet; "and more than that, my tenant, my king of tenants, will throw you from the top to the bottom of the staircase, as he just told you, and I will sweep you out, like filth as you are."

"This old woman is able to stir up the whole house against us, if she chooses. Come, we are paid, and have got our costs; let 's go," said Bourdin to Malicorne.

"Here are your papers," said the latter, throwing a package at the feet of Morel.

"Pick it up; you are paid for being civil," said Rodolphe, seizing the officer with one hand, and pointing with the other to the papers.

Perceiving from this new and powerful grasp, that he was no match for such an adversary, the officer stooped down, and in a surly manner picked up the package and handed it to Morel, who carelessly received it.

The whole appeared to him like a dream.

"Notwithstanding your wrist is as strong as a porter's, beware how you fall into our clutches," said Malicorne; and after shaking his fist at Rodolphe, with one bound he cleared ten steps, followed by his companion, who cast terrified glances behind him.

Madam Pipelet had taken a position that would enable her to revenge the officer's menaces against Rodolphe. She cast a glance at her bowl with an air of inspiration, and then said heroically:

"Morel's debts are paid: they will now be provided for without the aid of my pap; so here it goes. Look out, below there! look out!" and bending over the bannisters, the old woman emptied the contents of the vessel upon the heads and shoulders of the two officers, who had just reached the first landing.

"Clear out! push ahead!" cried the portière. "They are steaming like two dishes of soup. He, he, he! that's into 'em!"

"Ten thousand devils!" cried Malicorne, saturated with the culinary preparation of Madam Pipelet. "Mind what you are at up there, you old hag."

"Alfred!" screamed out Madam Pipelet, in a voice shrill and sharp enough to pierce a deaf man's ears; "Alfred! Alfred, my old darling! pounce on those two villains: they have been acting like Bedonins to thy '*Stasie*; they have taken liberties with me. Give it to 'em with the broomstick! get the oysterwoman and wine-dealer to help you! Streak it! sh, sh! psh! murder! bung! k-r-r! thunder and zounds! Give it to 'em!" And to give due emphasis to these awful sounds, to which she played an accompaniment with her feet, Madam Pipelet, carried away by her excitement of victory, threw from the top of the staircase her earthen bowl; which broke with a terrible racket at the very moment when the officers were descending the last steps of the stairs, which they were clearing with rapid leaps, their terror every instant increasing.

"Off with yourself, you vagabond," cried Anastasia, bursting with laughter, and crossing and unfolding her arms with an air of triumph. She then pursued her victims with shouts, and continued to lavish upon them most abusive epithets.

Morel cast himself at the feet of Rodolphe, exclaiming, "Ah! sir, you are the preserver of our lives. To whom are we indebted for this kind and unexpected aid?"

"To God! who ever pities and protects the honest."

CHAPTER X.... RIGOLETTE.

LOUISE, the daughter of the lapidary, was exceedingly lovely, but with a grave and sedate cast of countenance, resembling in the severe regularity of her features, the face which ancient sculptors have given to the wife of Jove, and in the elegance of her tall and stately form, the proportions which they have imparted to the huntress Diana. Her well-formed hand, though coarse and hardened by domestic labor, and the unpretending dress of her menial employment, could not disguise a lofty air of grace and nobility, which led her father, in the pride of paternal admiration, to bestow upon her the title of princess. We despair of attempting to describe the gratitude, the joyous trance of the artisan's family, rescued so suddenly from an impending fate. The daughter's death was for a moment forgotten in the delightful revery which rapt their spirits. Rodolphe could not but notice the extreme paller of Louise, and the deep melancholy which weighed upon her heart, in spite of her father's unexpected rescue from imprisonment. Anxious to dissipate every cloud which obscured the future, and completely tranquillize the family, and also to explain a liberality, which might endanger his incognito, Rodolphe withdrew the lapidary to the landing, while Rigolette informed Louise of her sister's death.

"Day before yesterday, a lady visited you," said he.

"Yes, sir; and the situation in which she found us seemed to give her extreme pain."

"Next to God, to her your gratitude is due."

"Can it be true, sir—that young lady——"

"Is your benefactress: I have often carried goods to her house. The day before yesterday, I came here to rent an apartment, and I learned from the portière your unfortunate condition. Relying on the well-known charity of this lady, I hastened to inform her of your necessities. She came to judge herself of the extent of your wants; she was painfully moved, but as your misery might have resulted from misconduct, she charged me, personally to obtain information respecting you, that she might adapt her charity to your deserts and necessities."

"Kind and excellent lady: good reason had I to say——"

"To Madeleine, 'if the rich only knew the misery of the poor.' Was it not so?"

"How, sir, came you to know the name of my wife? Who gave you the information?"

"Since six o'clock," said Rodolphe, "I have been concealed in the little store-room of your garret."

"You, sir!"

"And have heard everything that has transpired: honest and excellent man."

"But how came you there?"

"How could I learn about your character, better than from yourself; and I wished, unknown to you, to observe all that passed. The porter spoke to me of this little nook, wishing to resign it to me as a wood-closet. This morning I asked to see it, and remained there for an hour; and have convinced myself, that there was no character more noble, more honest, more courageously resigned, than your own."

Oh, sir, there is no great merit in it: I was born honest, and do not know how to be otherwise."

"I know it; and for this reason I do not praise, but appreciate you. I was about to fly to your relief from the officers, when I heard the voice of your daughter. I wished to leave to her the pleasure of effecting your deliverance. The rapacity of the officers unfortunately deprived her of that high satisfaction, and it was necessary for me to appear. Yesterday, I received certain sums which were due me; and I was so situated, that I could anticipate your benefactress in discharging this unfortunate debt. But your misfortunes have been so great, and you have borne them with such unshaken worth and constancy, that the interest which you have excited will not terminate here; and I am able, in the name of your guardian angel, to promise a peaceable and happy future to yourself and family."

"Can it be so? can it be so? But, at least, sir, tell me her name—the name of the saving angel, as you call her."

"Yes, sir, she is an angel; and you were again right in saying, that great and small alike have their troubles."

"Is this lady unhappy?"

"Is there a being in the world that is without sorrow? But I know of no good reason for concealing her name: she is called——" Rodolphe at this moment remembered that Madam Pipelet knew that the Marchioness d'Harville had come to the house to ask for the Commander; and fearing the indiscreet gossiping of the portière, said, after a moment's silence:

"I will tell you the lady's name on one condition."

"Oh! speak, sir."

"It is, that you will not mention it to any one: do you understand me?"

"Oh! I swear not to do it, sir. But may I not thank this protectress of the wretched?"

"I will ask the Marchioness d'Harville: I doubt not but she will consent."

"The lady's name?"

"The Marchioness d'Harville."

"Oh! I shall never forget that name—she shall be my saint, my adoration! When I think that to her I owe that my wife and children and all are saved—not all! not all! My poor Adèle! we never shall see her more. Alas! alas! we must have lost her one day, for she was given up by the physician;" and the lapidary dried his tears.

"In regard to the last duties to the poor girl, if you have confidence in me you must follow my advice. I do not yet occupy my room. It is large, healthy and airy. There is already in it a bed, and whatever is needed for your family will be carried there; and you can all remain in my room until the Marchioness provides for you a more suitable abode. The body of your child can remain in the garret, where, as is proper, to-night it shall be attended by a priest. I shall go and ask Mr. Pipelet to superintend all these sad details."

"But, sir, to deprive you of your room is unnecessary. Now that we are tranquil and I have no fear of being imprisoned, our poor apartment will seem to us a palace; especially if Louise remains with us to take charge of everything, as she used to do."

"Louise will not leave you again. You said it would be a luxury to have her ever with you: it will be more, it will be a recompense."

"Good Heaven! sir, is it possible? This appears to me like a dream. I never was a devotee, but such a change in my fate, such a providential assistance, would incline me to believe!"

"Believe, at any rate. What do you risk by believing?"

"That is true," replied Morel sincerely. "What is the risk?"

"If it were possible to mitigate a father's grief, I would say that one of your daughter's has been taken, but another restored."

"Very true, sir; very true. We shall have our Louise now."

"You accept my chamber, do you not? In what other place can you perform these sad funeral rites? Think of your wife, whose mind is already weakened; can you leave such a painful object for four-and-twenty hours before her eyes?"

"You think of everything—of everything, my good sir! how kind you are!"

"You must give thanks to your angelic protectress—her own spirit inspires me. I merely repeat what she would say to you. She will approve of every arrangement which I propose. You will accept, then, my chamber: that point is decided. I beg of you now to tell me who Jacques Ferrand is?"

A dark cloud passed over the brow of Morel.

"Is this Jacques Ferrand the same Jacques Ferrand who is a notary, and lives in rue de Sentier?"

"Yes, sir. Do you know him!" And again, troubled by his fears for Louise, the artisan cried, "Since you have overheard what I said, am I not right—am I not right, in being enraged at that wretch? Who knows whether, at this moment, my Louise—my daugh—daughter——" he could not finish the sentence.

Rodolphe understood his fears, and said to him: "The conduct even of the notary should inspire you with confidence. He doubtless caused you to be arrested, in revenge for your daughter's disdain. I believe him to be a most dishonest man. If he is so," continued Rodolphe, after a moment's silence, "let us believe that the Almighty will punish him."

"He is very rich, and a great hypocrite, sir."

"You are poor, almost desperate: has Providence failed you? To you a saving angel has come; an inexorable avenger will find the notary."

Just at this moment Rigolette came from the garret, drying her tears. Rodolphe said to the fair grisette:

"Is it not right, my pretty voisine,* that Mr. Morel should occupy my room with his family, until his benefactress, whose agent only I am, shall have found for him a suitable home?"

Rigolette looked at Rodolphe with astonishment.

"Will you be generous enough for *that*?"

"Yes; but on one condition, which depends upon yourself, my voisine."

"Oh, I grant anything that depends on me."

"I have some pressing accounts to examine for my patron. They will soon be sent for. All my papers are below. If you will permit me as a voisin to complete my work in your room, at the corner of your table, while you are sewing, I will not disturb you; and Morel's family, with Mr. and Madam Pipelet's aid, can be immediately established in my room."

"Oh, if that is all, sir, I most willingly consent. Neighbors should aid each other. You, by your kind conduct to Mr. Morel, give us a bright example for imitation. I am at your service, sir."

"Call me voisin, or I shall not be at my ease, nor dare to accept your kindness," continued Rodolphe, laughing.

"We will not dispute about that. I may with propriety call you a voisin, since you are so."

"Mamma calls you, papa. Come, come;" said one of the boys, running out of the garret.

"Go, good Mr. Morel. When all is ready below, you shall be informed of it."

"Now, voisine," said Rodolphe to Rigolette, "you must do me one other favor."

"With pleasure, if it be possible."

"I am sure you are an excellent little manager. We must buy immediately, all that is needful to make Morel's family comfortable; to clothe them, and lodge them in my chamber; in which, as yet, there is only my bachelor's furniture, and there is precious little of it, which was brought in here yesterday. Come; what shall we do to procure at once all that we wish for the family?"

Rigolette reflected a moment, and said:

* It will be necessary to employ the French words voisin, neighbor, and voisine, female neighbor, during the whole of the following scenes.

"Before two hours, you shall have clothes ready made, warm, and suitable; good white linen for all the family; two small beds for the children, one for the grandmother; in fine, everything you wish. But this will cost you much money."

"How much?"

"Oh, at least—at least—five or six hundred francs."

"For all?"

"Alas! yes; you see that it is a great sum of money," said Rigolette, opening her eyes wide and shaking her head.

"And how soon can we have these articles provided?"

"Before two hours have passed."

"You are then a fairy, voisine."

"Oh, no, indeed! it is very easy to accomplish. The Temple is not two steps from here, and all you wish may be found there."

"The Temple!"

"Yes, the Temple."

"And what is that?"

"Don't you know what the Temple is, voisin?"

"No."

"And yet that is the place where poor people, like you and me, clothe themselves and buy their furniture, if they are economical. Things there are much cheaper and quite as good as in other places."

"Indeed!"

"To be sure. For example, what did you pay for your frock-coat?"

"I cannot tell you exactly."

"How, voisin, don't you know how much your frock-coat cost?"

"I will tell you in confidence, voisine, that I owe for it yet," said Rodolphe, smiling; "now you understand why I cannot tell how much it cost."

"Ah! voisin, you appear to me to be very careless in your habits."

"Oh, no."

"It must be corrected, if you wish us to be friends; which I already see that we shall be, you have so kind a look. You will not be sorry to have me for a voisine. You will assist me, and I you; 'tis for that that people become neighbors. I shall take good care of your linen; you will help now and then to wax my floor. I rise early; I shall call you, that you may not be late at your shop: I shall knock on your wall until you say, 'Good morning, voisine."

"It is a bargain. You shall wake me up and take care of my linen, and I will wax your floor."

"And you will be systematic?"

"Certainly."

"And when you have things to buy, you will go to the Temple? For see; for instance, your frock-coat cost you eighty francs, I suppose: well, at the Temple you might have bought it for thirty."

"This is wonderful. Then you believe, that with five or six hundred francs the poor Morels——"

"Will be entirely clothed—and clothed for a long time also."

"My voisine, I have an idea."

"Give us your idea."

"You are learned in housewifery?"

"But so-so," said Rigolette, with a little affectation.

"Take my arm, and let us go to the Temple to buy clothing for the Morels. How do you like that?"

"Oh, good! excellent! Poor people! But where is the money to come from?"

"I have it."

"Five hundred francs?"

"The benefactress of the Morels has given me full liberty, and I will spare nothing to render them comfortable. If there is even a place where better furniture is to be found than at the Temple, I——"

"Better is to be found nowhere; and, what can't be said of many other places, everything is found there ready made: little dresses for the children, and gowns for the mother."

"Let us go to the Temple, then, voisine."

"I would do so, but——"

"What is the matter?"

"Nothing. But you see, my time is all I have: even now, I am a little behindhand, because I came to sit with poor Madam Morel; and an hour here and an hour there, makes up by little and little a whole day, and that is thirty sous; and though I earn nothing the whole day, I must live. But never mind, I shall take this hour from the night; and besides, pleasure parties are rare, and I shall make one of this. It seems to me that I am rich—rich—very rich, and that it is with my own money that I am buying all these fine things for the Morels. Now, then, give me time to put on my cap and my shawl, and I am yours, my voisin."

"If that is all, voisine, you will permit me, while you are so engaged, to bring up my papers to your room?"

"Do so: then you will see my room," said Rigolette, with pride; "for it is already in order, which will prove to you how early I rise; and that if you are a lazy fellow, and sleep late, and are idle, so much the worse, for you have got into a bad neighborhood." And light as a bird, Rigolette hastened down stairs, followed by Rodolphe, who went into his room to get rid of the dust of Mr. Pipelet's closet.

We shall soon explain why Rodolphe had not heard of the abduction of Fleur de Marie, from the farm of Bouqueval, which took place the night before.

We will remind the reader, that Mademoiselle Rigolette alone knew the new address of François Germain, son of Madam George; and that Rodolphe had much interest in discovering that important secret. The walk to the Temple which he had just proposed to the grisette, would establish a confidence between them; and distract the sad thoughts awakened by the death of the artisan's daughter. The child that Rodolphe bitterly regretted, was, at the time of its supposed death, about the same age with the daughter of the artisan, just dead. It was actually at this age that Fleur de Marie had been given to Chouette, by the governess of the notary, Jacques Ferrand.

We shall explain very soon with what intention, and under what circumstances Rodolphe, provided with a formidable roll of papers, in order to sustain his disguise, now entered the chamber of Rigolette.

CHAPTER XI. ..... RIGOLETTE.*

RIGOLETTE was of nearly the same age with Goualeuse, her old prison friend. There was, between these two girls, the difference which exists between tears and laughter; between joyous carelessness and melancholy revery; between the most daring recklessness, and a sombre and incessant foreboding of a melancholy future; between a delicate, exquisite, elevated and poetic nature, painfully sensible, wounded by remorse, and a gay, lively, happy, excitable, prosaic and unreflecting nature, but, nevertheless, kind and sympathizing. Far from being selfish, Rigolette had no sorrows but those of her friends to bear; she sympathized with all her energies, and devoted to those who suffered body and soul. But affliction made no permanent impression on her; she thought no more of it when her back was turned.

Bursts of laughter were interrupted by a flood of sincere tears, and she dried her tears only to laugh again. Like a true child of Paris, Rigolette preferred excitement to tranquillity; action to repose; the rough and stunning harmony of the orchestra of the balls at Chartreuse and the Coliseum, to the sweet murmurs of the wind, the waters and the foliage; the deafening tumult of the crowded streets of Paris, to the silent fields; the glare of fireworks, the flames of the rockets, the crash of bombs, to a dark, silent and star-lit night.

Alas! 'tis true: the good girl actually preferred the black mud of the streets of the capital, to the verdure of the flowery meadows; its angular and burning pavements, to the fresh and velvet moss of wood-paths, perfumed with violets; the suffocating dust of the barriers or the boulevards, to the waving of the golden corn-fields, intermingled with the wild poppy and blue-bell. Rigolette only left her room on Sunday, and on the morning of each day, to purchase chickweed, bread, milk and bird-seed, for herself and her pets, as Madam Pipelet said. But she lived in Paris for Paris alone: she would have been in despair had she been forced to reside elsewhere than at the capital.

There was yet another anomaly in her character, in spite of this taste for Parisian pleasures, and the unrestrained freedom of her life.

Notwithstanding the incredible economy to which she was obliged to subject herself, notwithstanding she was the most piquant, lively and enticing little grisette in the world, Rigolette distinguished none of her admirers with any special marks of her favor. She associated entirely with persons of her own rank in society, or such was the intention of the fair seamstress.

A wealthy and celebrated artist—a sort of Modern Raphael, whose Julio Romano Cabrion was—had seen in the studio of Mr. Pipelet's tormentor, a portrait of Rigolette, which was by no means too flattering to the beautiful original. Impressed with the charming features of the young grisette, the master had maintained that his pupil had exaggerated and idealized his model. Cabrion, proud of his charming voisine, proposed to give the master an opportunity of judging of the correctness of

* Rigolette means the laughing one.

his criticism, by exhibiting the original at one of the Sunday balls at the Hermitage. The Raphael, charmed by her exquisite face and perfect form, had exerted all his powers of fascination to supplant his Julio Romano. He offered to the grisette a most splendid and tempting settlement. She spurned the temptation most heroically, although she accepted without any scruple or prudery, a modest dinner at the Meridien, a famous place of resort on the Boulevard du Temple, or of a seat in the gallery, at either la Gaieté or the Ambigú.

Such intimacies, and such unreserved confidence, moved the censure of the more scrupulous, and excited some suspicion against the perfect purity of the laughing seamstress. We will add a few words about the grisette's personal appearance, and introduce Rodolphe into the apartment of his voisine.

Rigolette was scarcely eighteen years of age, rather small in her proportions, but of such a light, active, and well-rounded and tempting figure, that the addition of an inch to her height, or to the swell of her modelled form, would have destroyed the charming medium between a sylph and a Hebe. Her little foot, always irreproachably shod in small bottines of black prunelle, reminded the admiring gazer of the quick, alert, and coquettish movement of the quail: she did not seem to touch the pavé; she skimmed rapidly over the surface, or rather, fluttered above it.

This quick, bewitching and slightly startled movement, peculiar to grisettes, must be attributed to three causes; either to their desire to display their prettiness, or to the fear of betraying a consciousness of it by a too expressive pantomime, or to an anxious wish to lose as little time as possible in their peregrinations.

Rodolphe had as yet only been favored with a glance at Rigolette, in the obscure garret, or the still more obscure landing; he was therefore amazed by the captivating charms of the young girl, as he gently entered an apartment lighted by two large windows. He remained for a moment motionless, in silent admiration of the beautiful picture. In front of the glass upon her mantel, Rigolette was tying under her chin the strings of a little cap of embroidered tulle, ornamented with small bows of pink-colored ribbon. The cap, very small and jauntily fixed upon the back part of her head, displayed two large and heavy plaits of hair, brilliant as jet, falling low upon the forehead. Her eyebrows, small and pencilled, arched two large, black, wide-awake and mischievous-looking eyes. Her firm and round cheeks were fresh to the sight, and to the touch of the lips, as a ruddy peach moistened with the cool dew of the morning; while her small, pert, impudent and slightly pugged nose, would have made the fortune of a Lisette or a Marton. Her mouth was somewhat large, with an arch and quizzical expression, while her teeth were small, firmly closed, and pearly. Three charming dimples, two on the cheeks and one in the chin, added piquancy to her countenance, and a small beauty-patch was murderously placed near the corner of her mouth. Between a nicely-trimmed collar, rolling back rather low, and the bottom of her cap, prettily bound with pink ribbons, could be discovered the roots of a forest of beautiful hair, so neatly and smoothly arranged close to the skin, that it seemed like a dark line traced on the ivory of her charming neck. A merino dress of raisin de Corinthe, prettily made by Rigolette herself, revealed a waist so slender, that corsets would have only been a burden to her form; and the industrious seamstress was, moreover, forced to dispense with the luxury for economy's sake. A suppleness and unusual ease and freedom in the slightest motion of her breast and neck, brought to mind the pliant and wary motions of a graceful cat. Imagine a dress, close-fitting around her full and chiselled form, and you will own how entirely superfluous was that accessory of the toilette to which we have just alluded. The belt of a small green Levantine apron encircled a waist which could have been clasped by the fingers. Confiding in her imaginary solitude—for Rodolphe was still at the door motionless and unseen—Rigolette, having smoothed her glossy locks with her tiny and stainless hand, placed her small foot upon the chair, and stooped down to fasten the laces of her bottine. The operation could not be performed without exhibiting to the gratified gaze of the Prince, a cotton stocking of unsoiled purity, and the swell of an ankle of irreproachable model.

After this detailed description of her toilet, the reader may imagine that the grisette had selected her prettiest cap and apron to do honor to her voisin in their proposed visit to the Temple.

She found the so-called merchant's clerk very much to her taste; his face, at once benevolent, haughty and bold, pleased her, and the kindness which he had displayed to the Morels, in generously surrendering to them his apartment, impressed her favorably with his disposition. Thanks to his humanity and prepossessing appearance, Rodolphe had already ingratiated himself with the frank and charming grisette. In conformity to her practical ideas of the duties reciprocally imposed by the laws of neighborhood, and the forced intimacies resulting therefrom, she was delighted that an individual so agreeable as Rodolphe occupied the place of the travelling clerk, of Cabrion and François Germain; for she had begun to be dissatisfied with the long vacancy of the adjoining chamber, and with the fear that it might be taken by a less charming voisin.

Rodolphe improved his invisibility to cast curious and searching glances around the room, which appeared to deserve even higher praises than Madam Pipelet had lavished upon the neat and tasteful arrangements of Rigolette. A gray paper with green drawings upon it, covered the walls. The clean, unsoiled floor of bright red, shone like a mirror. A stove of white porcelain was placed in the chimney, where also a supply of wood was seen, so systematically arranged, and cut so short, and so small, that each piece, without exaggeration, might be compared to an enormous match. On the mantel of gray stone, were discovered two vases of emerald green, filled from the earliest spring with common but fragrant flowers. A small case of boxwood held a silver watch; upon one side of which, stood a brass candlestick, brilliant as gold, and upon the other, no less glittering, a cylindrical lamp, with a copper reflector sliding on a rod of steel, rising from a pedestal of lead. A mirror, square, and sufficiently large, with a frame of black wood, was hung above the mantel.

Curtains of Persian cloth, with fringes of green, the graceful handiwork of the fair seamstress, hung upon light triangles of iron above the couch, and also before the windows; a counterpane of the same color was spread upon the bed. There were two closets with glass doors, placed each side of an alcove, which concealed, undoubtedly, the toilet furniture, the portable stove, the water-vase, brooms, &c., for none of these domestic utensils disfigured the neat and tidy appearance of the grisette's chamber.

A commode of well-veined and polished walnut, four chairs of the same wood, a work-table at which the seamstress sewed, covered with a green woolen cloth, and a fauteuil of rushes, with a footstool of the same stuff, at which she usually sat, completed the furniture of Rigolette's room. The cage of her two canaries, constant guests at the grisette's table, stood between the windows. By one of those ingenious suggestions which occur only to the poor, one of these cages was placed in a large box of wood, resting on the table, about a foot deep, filled with earth; covered in winter with moss, and in spring with grass and delicate flowers, and called by Rigolette her bird's conservatory. Rodolphe examined it with interest, and from it perfectly understood the atmosphere of joyous gayety with which the young girl was surrounded. To his imagination, this solitude was made vocal by the warblings of the birds, and the songs of Rigolette. In summer, she had doubtless worked at her window, half-embowered with a blooming curtain of wild pea and various creeping plants, while in winter she drew close to the stove, and worked by the light of her little lamp. On Sundays, in company with a neighbor, as gay and loving as herself, she sought some relaxation from this laborious life; but on Monday her work was no less cheerfully renewed, with an imagination recalling past pleasures, and anticipating those of the future. The refrains of "Lisette" and "*Sa Chambrette*" occurred to Rodolphe's mind. He thought of those romantic songs, which gayly lay the scene of a suffering yet joyful love, in retired and gloomy attics; for that poetry which embellishes everything, can convert the garret of poverty into the bower of love—a poetry, of which no better divinity could be found than the blooming being before him. These thoughts passed through Rodolphe's mind, while his eyes were listlessly fixed upon the door, where he observed an enormous bolt, which would not have disgraced the grate of a penitentiary. Two different purposes might be answered by that bolt, thought the Prince—to fasten lovers in—to fasten them out. The first hypothesis confirmed the inuendoes of Madam Pipelet; the second refuted them. Rodolphe was engaged in this speculation, when Rigolette, turning her head, perceived him; and without changing her position, said:

"You are there, are you? my voisin?"

CHAPTER XII. ..... VOISIN AND VOISINE.

The boot having been laced, the pretty ankle disappeared under the folds of the ample dress, and Rigolette said:

"Ah! you are there, are you, you rogue?"

"Yes; I was there, lost in silent admiration."

"Admiring what, voisin?"

"This pretty little room, for you are lodged like a queen."

"Indeed, my room is my luxury, for I seldom go out, and that is why I please myself at home."

"I am filled with amazement! What pretty curtains! And this commode is as beautiful as mahogany. You must have spent much money here?"

"Do not mention it. I had four hundred and twenty-five francs when I left prison, and now the sum is almost gone."

"Left prison!"

"Yes. It is quite a long story. You will do me the justice to believe that I did not go to prison for any offence."

"Assuredly; but why did you go there?"

"After the cholera, I was left alone in the world. I was then, I think, about ten years old."

"But who had taken care of you till then?"

"Oh, very good people; but they died of the cholera." Here the large black eyes of Rigolette moistened with a tear. "They sold the little they possessed to pay some small debts, and I had no one who was willing to receive me. Utterly at a loss what to do with myself, I went to the guard-house, which was opposite to my house, and said to the sentinel, 'Mr. Soldier, my parents are dead, and I know not where to go, or what to do with myself." The officer soon appeared, who took me to the police office; and I was sent to the prison as a vagabond, and left there till at the age of sixteen."

"But your parents?"

"I do not know who my father was, and my mother died when I was six years old. She removed me from the foundling hospital, where she was once obliged to place me. The good people of whom I have before spoken, lived at our house. They had no children of their own; and seeing me an orphan, took care of me——"

"Who were they? what were their names?"

"Father Cretu, as I called him, was a house-painter, and his wife an embroideress."

"But were they trades-people, well off in the world?"

"Much like other families in the world: when I say families, I do not mean that they were married, although they called each other husband and wife. They had their ups and downs: to-day they were in opulence if they had work, and on the next day in want if they had none; but they were not prevented thereby from being ever gay and contented." The countenance of the laughing seamstress, at this recollection, recovered its wonted cheerfulness. "There was no such household in the entire quarter—always joyous, ever merry and reconciled with their condition; and moreover, they were as good as it is possible for mortals to be: they lived less for themselves than for other people. Her thirty years sat lightly upon Mother Cretu; she was bright as a new penny, sharp as a needle, merry as a lark. Her husband was a second Roger Bontemps, with a large nose, a wide mouth, a paper cap eternally upon his head, and so droll a face that one could not behold it without bursting into a roar of laughter. When he came home after he had finished his labor, he did nothing but sing and caper about like a frolicksome child. He made me dance and leap over his knees; he sported and frolicked with me as if I had been of the same age with himself; and his wife treated me as if I had been her blessing. But one thing was required from me by each of them, and that was, always to appear in good humor; and I was, thank Heaven, not for a moment unhappy; and for this reason they called me Rigolette—a name which I have ever since borne. They set me such an excellent example of gayety, that I never for an instant saw them sad. Their reproaches were of this character: 'You are a fool, Cretu—you make me laugh entirely too much,' said the wife; or, 'Hush, Ramouette,'—I know not why he called her so—'hush, my dear; you are too droll—you will be the death of me;' and I laughed to see them laugh. You see now how I was trained, how my character was formed; and I hope I have improved by my lessons."

"'Tis very wonderful, my pretty voisine. And did they never have any disputes?"

"Never—never. On Sundays and Mondays, and frequently on other days, they said they held a festival in celebration of their wedding; and wherever they went I always accompanied them. Father Cretu was an excellent workman: he always commanded the price which he asked, as also did his wife. If they had enough to answer for their Sunday's enjoyment, and to continue it during Monday, and to meet their ordinary expenses, they were abundantly contented; and if they had nothing to eat or drink, they were quite as contented. I remember, that when they were reduced to bread and water, father Cretu invariably resorted to his library."

"Had he a library, then?"

"He bestowed that name upon a closet which contained a collection of all the new songs; for he purchased them all, and knew them by heart. When the pantry was entirely empty, he took from his library an old cookery-book, and said: 'Let us see, what shall we have for dinner to-day? shall we dine upon this dish, or would you prefer that?' and as he read to us a catalogue of good things, each one of us selected the dish which was to our taste. Father Cretu would then take a kettle, and with antics, gestures, and grimaces the drollest in the world, pretended to put into it the constituents of an excellent stew, and pour it out upon a plate; which he placed upon the table with such singular expressions of the face, and such natural gestures, as to compel us to hold our sides to check our laughter. He would, for example, read to us a description of a chicken fricassee, which one of us had selected, that would fairly make our mouths water. Our dinner of dry bread was the merriest entertainment in the world: we laughed like fools at what he read."

"And had this happy household no debts?"

"No. While the money lasted, we were happy: when there was none, we dined sparingly, as father Cretu said he was dieting for his health."

"And did you never think of the future?"

"Our future was Sunday and Monday; in the summer time we went beyond the barriers, and in winter, to the faubourg."

"Since these good people were so happy, since they so frequently celebrated their marriage, why did they not actually marry?"

"I once heard this question asked them by one of their friends."

"Well: what answer did they make?"

"They said, 'When we have children, it will be time enough to think of it; but as we are contented as we are, why should we contract an obligation to do that which we do willingly without one? besides, it would cost us money, and we have already a precious little of that article.' "But only think," said Rigolette, interrupting herself; "how I run on, how I prattle! but it is always the same, for when I talk of those excellent people who were so kind to me, I cannot restrain my tongue. Be kind enough to take my shawl from my bed, and fasten it neatly under my collar with this large pin; we must hasten, for it is now quite late, and it will require some time to select all the articles which we wish to purchase for the poor Morels."

Rodolphe hurried to obey the orders of Rigolette. He took from the bed a large plaid shawl of brown and scarlet, and placed it carefully upon the shoulders of the grisette.

"Now, my voisin, raise up my collar a little, pin the shawl and the dress together, stick the pin in pretty deep—but be careful that you do not prick me."

In order to execute this perilous command, Rodolphe was compelled to bring his fingers in contact with the ivory neck, where the line of raven hair was so beautifully traced. The day was cloudy, and it was necessary for him to bring his face very near in order to execute the delicate operation; and either the point of the pin or the lips of Rodolphe, touched that white, fresh and polished neck. At all events, Rigolette turned hastily around, and with an expression half laughing, half sedate which inspired Rodolphe with regret for the innocent liberty which he had taken, said:

"Never—never will I ask you, my voisin, to put on my shawl again."

"Pardon me, voisine; but my awkwardness is extreme."

"It was not your awkwardness, sir, of which I complained. Come, give me your arm and behave with more propriety, or I shall be obliged to quarrel."

"Very true, voisine—but it was not my fault; your little neck was so white that it dazzled my eyes, and I bent down my head in spite of myself, and ——"

"Well, well: I shall take good care hereafter that this giddiness does not return," said Rigolette, shaking at him her finger. She then closed the door. "Here, take my key; it is so large that it will wear out my pocket—it is a perfect pistol;" and then she laughed.

"Rodolphe took charge of the burden, for the key was enormous, and might have figured gloriously in one of those allegoric representations, in which the vanquished come to surrender the keys of the city gates to the victors.

Although Rodolphe was convinced that there was so great a change in his appearance, during the lapse of years which had passed since their last interview, that Polidori would not be able to recognize him; he nevertheless thought it prudent to elevate the collar of his frock-coat as he passed before the door of the charlatan.

"Do not forget, voisin, to inform Mr. Pipelet that the articles

for the Morels will be brought here, and that he must have them carried into your room."

"You are right; we shall enter the porter's lodge in a moment."

Mr. Pipelet, with the everlasting hat upon his head, clothed in the perpetual green coat, seated before a table covered with scraps of leather, and remnants and wrecks of shoes of every description, was engaged in the operation of putting a sole upon a boot with all that seriousness and magisterial gravity which characterized him in the minutest operations. Anastasia was at this moment absent.

"Well, Mr. Pipelet," said Rigolette to him; "I hope for new and better times: thanks to my voisin, the poor Morels are relieved from their trouble: and when we think that they were about to drag the poor fellow to prison—bailiff's and such people, never have any hearts."

"Nor manners, Mademoiselle," added Mr. Pipelet in wrath, and gesticulating with the boot he was repairing, and into which he had inserted his left arm. "No, no: I do not hesitate to repeat, in the presence of God and men, that they are vulgar and outlandish dogs; for, profiting by the obscurity of the staircase, they ventured to take indecent liberties with my wife's person. Having heard the cries of indignant and insulted modesty, I yielded for a moment to the impetuosity of my character. I do not scruple to confess, that my first impulse was to remain in a fixed position, impurpled with my outraged honor, thinking of the insolent attempts to which Anastasia had been exposed, as was testified by the loss of her mental equilibrium; for she rattled the earthen pot from the top of the stairs to the bottom, on the heels of the debauchees, who have this moment passed before the lodge."

"You pursued them, I hope, Mr. Pipelet," said Rigolette, who could scarcely preserve her gravity.

"It was at first my determination to do so," answered Mr. Pipelet, with a deep sigh; "but I then reflected that I should have to brave their licentious looks, and perhaps even their libidinary remarks, which would have shocked and disgusted me, and even have destroyed my reason. I am not a worse man than others; but when these villains passed before the lodge, my blood rushed back to my heart, and I could not restrain my hand, which moved up to my eyes to shut out the sight of these voluptuous malefactors. But I confess I am not astonished; a day of wretchedness was foreordained to me, for last night I dreamed of Cahrion—the monster!"

Rigolette smiled: for the sighs of Mr. Pipelet mingled with the sounds which he bestowed with his hammer upon the sole of the old boot.

It appeared from the indignant remarks which were excited by the offended honor of Mr. Pipelet, that Anastasia had outrageously exaggerated the insults offered to her by the officers, in the usual style of coquettes, who seek to revive the fire of marital love, by representing themselves an object of great temptation to others.

"Voisin," whispered Rigolette to Rodolphe, "we must suffer Mr. Pipelet to believe in the insults which the fascinations of his wife have provoked, for he is really flattered by it."

Unwilling to destroy the agreeable illusion which Mr. Pipelet so assiduously nursed, Rodolphe said to him, "Sage as you are, Mr. Pipelet, you have on this occasion played the part of a philosopher; you have despised the effrontery of these vagabonds; and it is well known, that no temptation can shake the constancy of Madam Pipelet."

"Her constancy, sir, her constancy!" and he began again to brandish the boot; "for it I would lay my head upon the scaffold. Doubt the virtue of Anastasia! as well doubt the courage of Napoleon, the great! I would answer for it as for my own honor."

"You are right. But forget, I pray you, Mr. Pipelet, these miserable devils; and be kind enough, I beseech you, to do me a service."

"Men are born to aid each other," replied Mr. Pipelet, in a grave and sententious tone; "and when so excellent a tenant as you are solicits a favor, 't is already granted."

"I wish you to have carried into my room, the different articles of furniture which will soon be sent here; they are for the Morels."

"Be entirely at your ease, sir; I will manage the affair in person."

"Then," continued Rodolphe, in a grave tone, "a priest must be sought to watch by the little daughter they have this morning lost, you must go and certify to her death; and at the same time, an undertaker must be employed to superintend the funeral. Here is money. The benefactress of the Morels, whose agent I am, desired me to spare no expense, and wished that everything suitable should be provided."

"Confide in me, sir. Anastasia has gone out to purchase our dinner, and when she returns, she shall take care of the lodge, while I will execute your commissions."

At this moment, a man completely enveloped in his cloak, whose eyes even could scarcely be seen, approaching very cautiously the lodge, and inquired "if Madam Burette, the pawnbroker, was within?"

"Do you come from Saint Denis?" asked Mr. Pipelet, in a significant manner.

"Yes: in an hour and a quarter."

"All is right: go up."

The man in the cloak rapidly disappeared up the staircase.

"What does all this signify?" said Rodolphe to Mr. Pipelet.

"There is something going on between him and Mother Burette; there are everlasting goings and comings to see her. She told me this morning, to ask all persons who inquired for her, 'whether they came from Saint Denis?' and if they answered 'Yes: in an hour and a quarter,' to permit them to ascend, but no others."

"It is then a pass-word," said Rodolphe; "and curious enough too."

"Exactly; I said the same thing to myself. He is carrying on some mischief with Madam Burette. I know, without referring to the fact, that the limping and miserable urchin, Tortillard, employed by Mr. Cesar Bradamanti, came in last night, at two o'clock, with that old one-eyed hag, Chouette, and she remained until four o'clock with Mother Burette. During the whole of the time a hack, in which she came, waited for her at the door. 'Where did the one-eyed woman come from? What is she doing at this hour?' were the questions which I proposed to myself, without being able to settle upon an answer," said Mr. Pipelet, gravely.

"And the woman you call Chouette went away at four o'clock, in a hack?" asked Rodolphe.

"Yes, sir; and she will doubtless return; for Madam Burette told me that the countersign did not apply to the one-eyed woman."

Rodolphe, not without reason, fancied that Chouette was meditating some new mischief. But, alas! he did not conjecture how deeply interested he was himself in her movements.

"It is then decided, my dear Mr. Pipelet," said Rodolphe. "Remember what I have enjoined upon you about the Morels; and entreat also your wife to have a meal provided by the best restaurateur in the neighborhood."

"Trust to me, sir," said Mr. Pipelet; "as soon as my wife returns, I shall go to the Mayor's office, to the church, and to the restaurant's; to the church for the dead, to the restaurant for the living," added Mr. Pipelet, sententiously and poetically.

At the gate of the alley, Rodolphe and Rigolette met Anastasia, returning from market, with a large basket filled with provisions.

"Fortunately met," cried the portière, looking at voisin and voisine, with a significant and cunning look; "here you are arm-in-arm; all right, very well; youth must pass a pretty girl to catch a handsome beau: *vive l'amour*, go ahead." And the old woman disappeared into the depths of the alley, crying "Alfred, Alfred, don't sigh, old beloved; here is your 'Stasia, who brings you something to eat."

Rodolphe, giving Rigolette his arm, went with her in the direction of the Temple.

CHAPTER XIII..... RIGOLETTE'S BUDGET.

To the snow of the preceding night, had succeeded a very cold wind. The pavement of the street, ordinarily muddy, had become almost dry. Rigolette and Rodolphe directed their steps toward the immense and singular bazar called the Temple. The young girl leaned without ceremony upon the arm of the youthful cavalier, with as much confidence as if a long intimacy had existed between them.

"She is a droll creature, that Madam Pipelet, with her remarks," said the grisette to Rodolphe.

"Faith, my voisine, I find a good deal of truth in what she says."

"In what, my voisin?"

"She said: 'Youth must pass, *vive l'amour*, and go ahead!'"

"Well!"

"That's just my idea."

"How so?"

"I wish to pass my youth with you; be able to cry *vive l'amour*; and go wherever you may conduct me."

"I can readily believe it. You are not difficult to please."

"Where would be the harm? We are neighbors."

"If we were not neighbors, I would not go out with you thus."

"You persuade me then to hope?"

"To hope what?"

"That you will love me."

"I love you already."

"Indeed!"

"That's all very simple; you are good, you are lively. Notwithstanding you are poor yourself, you do all you can for these poor Morels, in interesting the rich in their misfortunes. You have a face that pleases me much; a beautiful form, that is always agreeable and flattering to me; I take your arm, and will take it often. There; I should think now, that I had given you evidences enough that I love you."

Then, interrupting herself, by a burst of laughter, Rigolette exclaimed:

"Look there: see that great fat woman, with her old furred shoes; one would think that she was dragged along by two cats without tails."

And then she laughed again.

"I would rather look at you, my voisine; I am so happy to think that you love me already."

"I tell you so, because it is so. If you did not please me, I should be equally as frank with you. I never can reproach myself with having deceived any one, nor of being a coquette. When I am pleased with a person, I tell him so at once."

Then, stopping short before one of the shops, the grisette cried out:

"Oh! see that pretty clock, and those two beautiful vases! I had already laid aside, by my economy, three francs and ten sous in my money-box, to purchase some, just like those. In five or six years, I shall be able to do it."

"Economy! my voisine, and you earn——"

"At least thirty sous a day, sometimes forty, but I never calculate but upon thirty; it is more prudent, and I regulate my expenses accordingly," said Rigolette, with as important an air as though she was alluding to the formidable budget of a prime minister.

"But with thirty sous a day, how can you live?"

"The account is not a long one: suppose I should make it out for you, my voisin? You have the appearance of a spendthrift; perhaps it will answer as an example, and be of service to you."

"Well: let us see, my voisine."

"My thirty sous a day, make forty-five francs a month; do they not?"

"Yes."

"Over and above that, I have to pay twelve francs for my rent, and twenty-three francs for food."

"Twenty-three francs for food!"

"Heavens! yes, every cent of it! Admit that for a young lark, like me, it is enormous: for you see, I deny myself nothing."

"What a little gormandizer!"

"Ah! but remember, that in that sum is also included the feed of my birds."

Well, I grant that if three of you live upon it, it is not so extravagant. But let us have each day by itself: for my instruction, bear in mind."

"Listen, then: one pound of bread is four sous, two sous for milk, that makes six; four sous for vegetables in winter, or fruits and salad in summer—I adore salad, because, like vegetables, it is clean to prepare, and does n't dirty the hands—there is already ten sous; three sous for butter, or oil and vinegar for dressing, thirteen; a pail of good clear water—oh! that is my great luxury—that makes fifteen sous, if you please. Add to that two or three sous a week, for hempseed and chickweed to regale my birds with, which ordinarily eat a few crumbs of bread and milk; that is twenty-two to twenty-three francs a month; no more nor less."

"And you never eat meat?"

"What! meat? why it costs ten or twelve sous a pound; how could I dream of it! And besides, it scents up the kitchen, and the sauce-pan; while for milk, vegetables and fruit, it's always ready. Stop! there is one dish I adore, it is no trouble, and I make it to perfection."

"Well, now for the dish."

"I put beautiful yellow potatoes in the oven of my stove; when they are baked, I mash them, with a little butter and milk, and then add a pinch of salt; oh! it is a dish for the gods! If you behave yourself, I will give you a taste of it."

"Prepared by your beautiful little hands, it ought to be excellent. But come, let us reckon, my voisine. We have already twenty-three francs for food, and twelve francs for rent; that's thirty-five francs a month."

"To make up the forty-five or fifty francs that I earn, there is yet ten or fifteen francs for my wood and oil during the winter; for my clothes and washing—that is to say, my soap, for except my sheets, I wash for myself—that's another luxury; why, a washwoman would cost the eyes in my head: so long as I do my own ironing, I get along pretty well. During the five winter months, I burn a cart-load and a half of wood, and I spend four or five sous a day for oil for my lamp, which makes about eighty francs a year for my fuel and light."

"So that only leaves one hundred francs for your clothes?"

"Yes; and it is by my economy in those that I lay up my three francs and ten sous."

"But your dresses, your shoes, this beautiful cap?"*

"My caps? I never put them on except when I go out; and that will not ruin me, for I fix them myself: at home, I find my hair is sufficient. As to my dresses and my boots, is n't the Temple near by?"

"Ah, yes, this lucky Temple. Well, you find there——"

"Most excellent and beautiful dresses. You must know, that great ladies are in the habit of giving their old dresses to their chamber-maids—when I say old, I mean that they have been worn a month or two in their carriage—and the chamber-maids go and sell them at the Temple for almost nothing. For example; see, I have a most beautiful merino dress from there, of *raisin de corinthe*, that I bought for fifteen francs, which perhaps had cost sixty; and it had scarcely been worn. I altered it to fit me, and I hope it does me honor?"

"It is you who honor it, my voisine. Now, with such a resource as the Temple, I begin to understand what you can do toward clothing yourself with one hundred francs a-year."

"Isn't it so? They have the most charming summer dresses there that you can imagine, for five or six francs; and *brodequins*, like those I have on, almost new, for two or three francs. Stop, would n't you think that they were made for me?" said Rigolette, halting and showing the end of her pretty foot, that was truly handsomely booted.

"The foot is charming, it is true; but you must have difficulty in fitting it. After this you will inform me, without doubt, that they sell children's shoes at the Temple."

"You are a flatterer, my voisin. But at any rate, admit that a young girl, alone by herself and very regular in her habits, can live on thirty sous a-day. It must be confessed, that the four hundred and fifty francs that I brought with me from the prison have very prettily assisted me in establishing myself. The first sight of my furniture inspires confidence, and it has enabled me to obtain work at home; but I had to wait a long time for it. Happily, I kept enough to live on for three months without counting upon my labors,"

"Do you know, my voisine, that with all your giddiness, you possess much method and good sense?"

"Forsooth, when one is all alone in the world, and wishes to be under obligations to no one, it is well worth while to arrange and keep the nest in order, as they say."

"And your nest is indeed charming."

"Isn't it? for in fact, I deny myself nothing. I even pay a rent above my means; I have birds; in summer always two flower-pots at least upon my chimney-piece, without counting my window-seat and my cage: and notwithstanding, as I told you, I had already three francs ten sous in my money-box, with which one of these days to ornament my mantelpiece."

"And what has become of your savings?"

"Alas! the last time I saw the poor Morels so miserable and so unhappy, I said to myself, 'There is no good sense in keeping three nasty twenty-sous pieces lying idle in a money-box, when honest people are dying of hunger alongside of you;' and then I lent my three francs to the Morels. I say *lent*, because I did not wish to humiliate them, though I would have given them to them with all my heart."

"Though you expect, my voisine, that when they are in good circumstances, they will reimburse you?"

"Why, yes: it will not be refused, for it will always be a beginning, toward providing ornaments for my mantelpiece: that is my constant dream."

"But it is always advisable, you know, to think a little on the future."

"Of the future?"

"If you should fall sick, for example."

"I! sick!" And Rigolette burst out into a laugh.

She laughed so loud, that a large man who was walking in front of her, carrying a dog under his arm, turned suddenly around, thinking that he was the object of it.

Rigolette, without ceasing to laugh, made him a kind of half-bow, accompanied by such a mischievous look, that Rodolphe

* Grisettes never wear hats or bonnets.

himself could not avoid partaking of the hilarity of his companion. The large man went on his way muttering.

"Are you foolish, my voisine?" said Rodolphe, on regaining a serious countenance.

"It is your fault."

"My fault?"

"Yes; you talked nonsense to me."

"Because I said that you might fall sick?"

"Sick! I?" And then she laughed again.

"Why not?"

"Do I look like it?"

"No: I never saw a face more rosy or fresh."

"Well, then; why do you wish me to fall sick?"

"What can you mean?"

"Mean! why at eighteen years of age, with such a life as I lead, is it possible? I rise at five o'clock, winter and summer; I go to bed at ten or eleven; I satisfy my hunger, which is never very great, it is true; I never suffer from cold; I work the whole day; I sing like a nightingale; I sleep like a mouse; I have a free, joyous and contented heart; I am sure of never wanting work: after all which, why would you have me fall sick? That would be too droll indeed."

And then she laughed louder than ever.

Rodolphe, struck by this blind and happy confidence in the future, reproached himself for having said that which, by chance, might have shaken it. He felt grieved at the thought, that a month of sickness might destroy this joyous and contented existence.

This deep confidence that Rigolette experienced in her eighteen years, and in her ability to earn a livelihood—her only wealth—appeared to Rodolphe most holy, and worthy of all respect.

On the part of the young girl, there was more of heedlessness than want of foresight. It was an instinctive belief in that divine commiseration and justice, that would never abandon an industrious and worthy creature; a poor girl, whose only wrong was indulging in a too fond reliance upon that youth and health, which a merciful Providence had extended to her.

When in the opening of spring, the merry and singing birds of Heaven brush lightly with their wings the blossoming roses, or dart swiftly through the mild and azure air, does the anticipated gloom of a dreary winter disquiet them?

"So," said Rodolphe to the grisette, "you desire nothing?"

"Nothing."

"Absolutely nothing?"

"No: that is to say, except the ornaments for my mantelpiece, and I will have those. I do not know when, but I am determined to have them—and that time will come, for rather than it should not, I will work day and night."

"And, besides these ornaments?"

"I desire nothing: only since yesterday."

"What now?"

"Why the day-before-yesterday, I wanted an agreeable neighbor, (voisin,) that I might do with him as I have always done in family matters; render such little services as he could reciprocate."

"That has already happened, my voisine; you shall take care of my linen; I will polish* your floor; to say nothing of your wakening me up early, by knocking upon my partition."

"And do you think that would be all?"

"Pray, what more is there to do?"

"Ah, you have n't guessed all yet. Are you not to take me a walking on Sundays to the barrières, and upon the boulevards? That's the only day I have for recreation."

"Is it so? well, in the summer we will visit the country."

"No: I hate the country: I like no place but Paris. Formerly, for the sake of obliging her, I made a few excursions to Saint Germain, with one of my prison companions, who was called Gonaleuse, because she was constantly singing: a very good little girl!"

"And what has become of her?"

"I don't know. She spent her prison money without apparently deriving much amusement from it. She was always sad, but kind and charitable. Whenever I had no work, we went out together; but when I had, I remained at home. I gave her my address, but she did not come to see me: without doubt, she has found employment herself. It is true, my voisin, that I love Paris above all places. Besides, when you can, on Sunday you will take me to dine at the restaurant; sometimes to the theatre, except when you are out of money, and then you will take me to see the shops in the arcades; that will amuse me almost as much. But depend upon it, in our little excursions you will be proud of me. You will see how genteel I shall be in my deep-blue Levantine dress, which I never wear except on Sundays: it fits me to a charm. Besides which, I have a little cap with orange-colored bows, trimmed with lace, which does n't look bad, I can assure you, upon my black hair: boots of Turkish satin, that I had made for me; a charming shawl of raw silk, like a cachemire. Thus you see, my voisin, every one will turn around to look at us. The men will say, 'Faith! the little creature is genteel'—and then on their side the women will say, 'What a very fine form that tall slender young man has; how graceful he is; and then his small auburn mustaches, how well they become him;' and so should I think too, for I adore mustaches. Unfortunately, Mr. Germain never wore a mustache, as his employers would not allow it. Mr. Cabrion wore one, but it was as red as his long whiskers, and I do not like long whiskers; and then again, he *loafed* about too much in the streets, and tormented poor Mr. Pipelet so cruelly. Then there was Mr. Girandeau, (my neighbor just previous to Mr. Cabrion,) who dressed very well, only he was cross-eyed: at first that used to bother me a good deal; it always seemed as though he was looking at some one alongside of me, and without thinking, I would turn around to see who it was."

And out came another burst of laughter.

Rodolphe listened to her chattering with attentive curiosity, and asked himself, for the third time, what idea should he form of the morals of Rigolette.

At times the freedom of the grisette's language, and the remembrance of the large bolt, almost induced him to believe that she loved her neighbors rather as brothers and companions, and that Madam Pipelet had slandered her. Then again he would smile at the simplicity of his own credulity, indulging in the supposition that a girl so young, so beautiful and so neglected, could have escaped the insidious wiles of Girandeau, Cabrion and Germain. The frankness and *naïve* familiarity of Rigolette would, notwithstanding, awake in him new doubts.

"You delight me, my voisine, in thus disposing of my Sundays," answered Rodolphe, gayly. "Won't we have famous times?"

"One moment, Mr. Spendthrift—I shall hold the purse-strings: I give you due notice of that. In summer, we can dine very well—yes, very well indeed—for three francs, at La Chartreuse or the Montmaitre Hermitage: then take a few turns on the wooden horses—I adore riding on horseback. That will cost you a hundred sous: not a livre more. Do you waltz?"

"Quite well."

"I am glad of that. Mr. Cabrion always went with me on foot, and when there, out of joke, he used to throw torpedoes upon the ground, which displeased them so much that they never wished to see us any more at La Chartreuse."

And then she laughed.

"Don't disturb yourself; I will answer for my discretion as to the torpedoes. But in winter, what shall we do then?"

"In winter, we shall want less to eat, and therefore we shall be able to dine perfectly well on forty sous, and then we shall have three francs left for the theatre; for I do not wish you to exceed your hundred sous. That's dear enough; but without me you would expend at least that for billiards, or at the porter-house, in company with those dissipated fellows who smell most horribly of pipe-smoke. Is it not better to spend the day cheerfully with a little friend, a good-natured child, who is always merry, who has time enough and a disposition to make you economize in your expenses, by hemming your cravats and taking care of your things?"

"Yes, my voisine, it is all a clear gain; only if my acquaintances should happen to meet me with my little friend hanging upon my arm?"

"Very well; they would only say, 'He's a happy fellow, that mink of a Rodolphe!'"

"Then you know my name?"

"Yes; when I heard the next chamber was let, I inquired to whom."

"Well, then, my friends will say, 'He is a happy fellow, that Rodolphe,' and they will envy me."

"So much the better."

"They will think me happy."

"So much the better—so much the better."

"And suppose I am not as happy as I appear?"

"What difference does that make to you, so long as they think so?"

"But your reputation?"

Rigolette burst into a loud laugh, and then answered:

"What! the reputation of a grisette? do you believe in such meteors? If I had father, mother, brother or sister, I should be

* In Paris, the floors of the lower classes are generally polished with wax instead of being carpeted.

careful what was said of me; but, being all alone, that's my own look-out."

"But truly, I shall be very unhappy."

"Why?"

"I should be compelled to affect happiness when in fact my love for you would be all moonshine—very much like your dining at father Crétu's on dry bread, while your appetite is tantalized by the savory reading of a cookery-book."

"Pshaw, pshaw! you will get along very well. I shall be so kind, so amiable, so little trouble to you, that you will say, 'Well, after all, I am about as agreeably situated with her as I would be with any other companion.' If you are disengaged during the week in the evenings, and if you should not find it annoying to you, you can pass your evening with me; you can take advantage of my fire and light; you will hire the new novels and read them to me. Better do that than lose your money at billiards. If you are occupied late at your employer's, or would rather go to the café, when you come in, if I happen to be up, you can bid me good night: if I shall have gone to bed, the next morning I will rap at your partition, and wake you up with a 'Good morning, Mr. Rodolphe.' Don't you think, Mr. Germain, my last neighbor, passed all his evenings with me. He never complained. He read all of Walter Scott to me: oh, it was very amusing. Sometimes, on Sundays when the weather was bad, instead of going to the theatre, or going out, he would buy something, and we would have a right snug little dinner in my room; and after that we would read, which would please me almost as much as the theatre. It is to show you that I am easily pleased, and that I am a very convenient little body, that I tell you all this. And besides, you speak of being sick: it that should ever occur, I would let you see that I am a regular little sister of charity. Ask Morel. Oh! I tell you what, Mr. Rodolphe, it 's a real prize in the lottery to have me for a neighbor."

"That is true; I should always be very happy with you. But speaking of Mr. Germain, where is he now?"

"In Paris, I believe."

"Do you never see him any more?"

"Since he quit the house, he has never been to see me."

"But where does he live? what does he do?"

"What is the object of these questions, my voisin?"

"Because I am jealous of him," said Rodolphe, smiling, "and I wished——"

"Jealous!" and Rigolette laughed. "Give yourself no uneasiness about that. Pshaw! poor fellow!"

After the hilarity of Rigolette had partially subsided, Rodolphe continued:

"Seriously, my voisine, I have the greatest interest in finding out Mr. Germain. You know where he lives, and I do not think you will consider it undue self praise for me to say, that I am incapable of betraying the secret which I solicit. I assure you, that the information which you can afford me will subserve his interest."

"Seriously, my voisin, I do not doubt that you entertain much good-will toward Mr. Germain; but as I promised him not to disclose his residence to any one, you must pardon me for not telling it even to you. Be not angry with me, I pray of you. If you had imparted to me a secret, I doubt not that you would be pleased with my refusing to betray it."

"But——"

"Now, my voisin, I say once for all, speak no more upon this subject. I have made a promise, and I will keep it; and whatsoever you may say, I shall always make the same reply."

In spite of her usual levity and giddiness, the young girl pronounced her determination in such a firm voice, that Rodolphe to his sorrow was convinced, that it was impossible for him to obtain the information which he desired. He was unwilling to make use of any artifice, or stratagem, for the purpose of surprising her confidence. He waited with patience, and said to her, laughing:

"Well, well; we will say no more of it. You are such a safe guardian of other people's secrets, that I doubt not you can keep your own."

"My secrets!" said the grisette, opening her large eyes. "I should be glad to have some; 'twould be so amusing."

"What! have you no tender secret of the heart?"

"Secret of the heart!"

"I mean, have you never been in love?" said Rodolphe, fastening a searching glance upon her, to ascertain, if possible, the real character of the grisette.

"Never in love? What do you call my feelings for Mr. Girandean, Mr. Cabrion, Mr. Germain, and yourself?"

"Did you not love them more than you do me? I mean—have you never—have you not loved them in some other manner than you do me?"

"Upon my honor, no; for I had to accustom myself to the cross-eyes of Mr. Girandean, to the red whiskers and jokes of Mr. Cabrion, and to the sadness of Mr. Germain; for he was always melancholy, poor fellow! but I had to conquer nothing in regard to you. You pleased me all at once."

"Now, my voisine, I beg of you not to be angry with me, for I am going to speak to you like a real friend."

"Oh, proceed; go on. I have a good disposition, and you have a good one also; so that I know you would not say anything intentionally to wound my feelings."

"You do me no more than justice; but tell me frankly—did you—did you never have a lover?"

"Lover! and have I time for a lover?"

"What has time to do with it?"

"What has time to do with it? A great deal, I assure you. In the first place, I should be jealous as a tigress; I should constantly be inventing some torture for my heart; and do I earn money enough, to be losing three or four hours a day in weeping and wailing? and if I should happen to be deceived, what tears! what sorrows! Why, 'twould entirely break up my business."

"All lovers are not unfaithful: all lovers do not draw tears from their sweethearts' eyes."

"If he were gentle and true, 'twould be still worse; for I couldn't live a moment without him; and as part of the time, at least, he would have to be at his shop, his office, or his work-bench, I should carry about a poor broken heart during his absence. I should invent a thousand devices; I should fancy that others were in love with him, and that he had probably gone to see them; and if, finally, he was to abandon me, I cannot conceive what would happen to me; at all events, this I know, that my work would suffer terribly, and then, what would become of poor me? In my most tranquil mood, the most I can do is, to just contrive to live, by working twelve or fifteen hours in a day; how could I make up for the three or four days which I should lose in the course of a week, by tormenting myself? 'Twould be impossible. And then I should be obliged to depend on some one. Oh! no, no! I love my liberty too well for that."

"Your liberty?"

"Yes, my liberty. I might become the first seamstress of the woman who employs me, I might earn four hundred francs, and my board."

"And do you not accept such an offer?"

"No, indeed. At other people's houses I should be a dependent; instead of which, I now have a room of my own, poor as it is. I owe nothing to anybody. I have courage, charity, cheerfulness, and health, and an excellent voisin. What do I need more?"

"Have you never thought of getting married?"

"Marry! what! marry a man as poor as myself! Look at the Morels and see what marriage leads to. When you have only yourself to take care of, there is no danger of your getting along."

"So, you never have any little day dreams? You never build castles in the air?"

"Oh, yes; I dream about the ornament for my mantelpiece. With the exception of that, what do you wish me to desire?"

"But, supposing some relation should leave you a small fortune, say an income of twelve hundred francs—I suppose, then, you would still continue to live on five hundred francs?"

"It might be for my good—it might be for my harm."

"Harm?"

"I am happy now, just as I am. I know the kind of life which I lead, but I do not know what it would be, if I should become rich. Listen to me, voisin; when after a good day's work, I go to bed at night with my candle blown out, and by the glimmering of the fire perceive the neatness and comfort of my little room, my curtains, my commode, my chairs, my birds, my watch, my table, loaded with the cloth confided to me, and I say to myself, all this furniture is my own, I am indebted for it to no one; these ideas, my voisin, lull me in a most delightful manner, and I sink to sleep, sometimes proud, but always satisfied. Now, if my house was purchased by the money which some relation had given me, 'twould not afford me one half of the gratification, I am sure of it. But behold! we have approached the Temple. Is it not a beautiful sight?"

CHAPTER XIV. ..... THE TEMPLE.

Although Rodolphe did not participate in the unbounded admiration of Rigolette for the Temple, he could not but be impressed with the appearance of this extensive bazar; its numerous divisions and multiplied recesses. An immense parallelo-

gram, built of wood and covered with slates, stands about the centre of the Rue du Temple, not far from a fountain which spouts near an angle of a large square: this building is the Temple. On the right runs the rue Petit Thomas, on the left rue Perce; and the Temple extends to a large circular building, with an immense rotunda surrounded by a gallery and arcades.

A large passage divides the parallelogram through the centre in half, which parts are again subdivided by an infinity of lateral and transverse passages, which intersect each other in every direction; all protected from the weather by the roof of the building.

New goods are generally excluded from this bazar; but the smallest fragment of any kind of cloth, the most insignificant pieces of iron, copper, brass, lead or steel, find a place and a market. Here can be found dealers in rags of all colors, shades, textures, qualities, ages, designed to supply a defect in any imaginable garment. Here may be seen heaps, without hyperbole, mountains of shoes of every variety of shape and size, and some of them twisted and shrunk into nameless things, and their soles of an inch thick, studded with nails like the gate of a prison, and hard as the hoof of a horse; a sort of fossil specimens of a defunct genus—the skeletons of shoes, the perishable parts of which have been devoured by time. All these things are mouldy, rotten, shapeless, and apparently worthless; yet in the Temple, the whole of these articles are regarded as merchandise, and there are *merchants* who support themselves by dealing in them. Here, also, are dealers in rings, crests, fringes, tassels, silk or cotton: the tags and remnants of demolished hangings, the era and use of which have passed away. Other dealers monopolize the trade in ladies' bonnets, which are brought to this market in the bags of itinerant peddlers, after long peregrinations and strange transformations; and in order that they may not occupy too much space in these shops about the size of a large box, these bonnets are neatly doubled up, pressed out flat and packed tight, very much, with the exception of the salt, like preserved herrings; and it is almost impossible to conceive how many things, by skill and economy in packing, can be crowded into a space four feet square. When a purchaser for one of these coverings for the head makes his appearance, the vender, in an apt and experienced manner, delivers the bonnet from its pressure, gives it a blow on the bottom part to make it stand, rubs the sides of it on her lap, and you have before you one of those fantastical objects which figure as the head-gear of old duchas, aunts and supernumeraries, in a provincial theatre. Farther on, underneath the sign of the "Fashion of the day," beneath the arcades of the rotunda which rises at the termination of that passage which divides the parallelogram in half, may be seen, like rejected offerings, myriads of garments of all shapes, forms, colors, fashions, style; more extraordinary and grotesque than the old bonnets to which we have alluded. Great-coats of grayish cloth, pretendingly adorned with three rows of buttons like those of a hussar, and comfortably provided with small collars of fox fur, may also be seen. Frock-coats, once bottle-green, which time and exposure has changed into a pea-green hue, and revamped by a yellow and blue plaid lining, produce a gaudy and graceful effect. Long-tail blues, swallow-tails, and coats of pale yellow, with rich collars and buttons of tarnished gilt, may be found here in great abundance. Garments *a la Polonaise*, trimmed with cat's fur collars, and frogs and arabesques of cord in various figures, may be seen with dressing-gowns skilfully manufactured from cast-off overcoats, the capes of which have disappeared; adorned with variegated patches, stitched with thread and lined with some red cloth with facings to match, having a belt made of old bell cord of twisted wool, to serve as a girdle for these elegant *dishabilles* in which Robert Macaire might have flourished in all the pomp and insolence of successful knavery. We will merely allude to a great variety of liveries, more or less equivocal, more or less fantastic; in the midst of which may occasionally be discerned the authentic servants' costume of some royal or princely house, which revolutions of all sorts have dragged from palaces to the gloomy arcades of the rotunda of the Temple. This display of old shoes, old hats, and fantastic garments, constitutes the grotesque side of this bazar: a sort of furnishing shop for the shabby-genteel. We cannot deny, or rather we must proclaim, that this vast establishment is of immeasurable benefit to those in moderate circumstances; for excellent articles almost new, or the depreciation of which, is of a very fanciful character, can there be purchased at an immense reduction. One side of the Temple, devoted to bedding, was crowded with heaps of blankets, mattresses and pillow-cases. Farther on were carpets, curtains and household furniture, of every sort; and in various other places, shoes, hats and miscellaneous garments, for all classes and all ages. These articles were neat, of good quality, and not objectionable in any respect.

It is almost incredible, before visiting this bazar, at what a small sum and trifling expenditure of time, a cart may be filled with all the necessary supplies for two or three families in absolute want of every housekeeping appliance. Rodolphe was struck with the eager and soliciting, yet civil and unexceptionable manners which the dealers assumed, standing before their stalls and inviting the patronage of the passer-by; manners marked with the respectful and deferential familiarity of a former age.

The Prince gave his arm to Rigolette; and hardly had they made their appearance in the centre of the passage, when he was assailed with the most tempting overtures.

"I beg of you, sir, to come and inspect my mattresses: they are as good as new. I will open a corner of one of them, that you may view the inside. One might call it lamb's wool, the hair is so soft and white."

"My pretty lady, I have sheets of fine linen superior to new ones, for the harshness of the material has all disappeared: it is soft as a glove, and firm as steel."

"My beautiful twain, do purchase some of these blankets; do see how nice, how light, and yet how warm the woollen is: one might almost call it velvet. They were never used twenty times. Come, my little lady, make your husband decide. Give me your custom: I will sell you all that you need. You will be satisfied, I know you will, and will call again to see Mother Bouvard; for you will find everything here that you want. I got hold of a superb lot yesterday. Come, come in, come in; 'twill cost nothing to look at it."

"Upon my word, my voisine," said Rodolphe to Rigolette, "I shall give the preference to this fleshy old woman. She mistakes us for a couple recently married, and I am flattered by it. I decide for this shop."

"Yes; let us patronize the excellent old fat woman: I like her face," said Rigolette.

The grisette and her companion entered the shop of Mother Bouvard.

With a magnanimity which would have been unprecedented in any other place than the Temple, the rival dealers were not piqued at the preference shown to Mother Bouvard. One of the neighboring proprietors had the generosity to say:

"It is very fortunate that Mother Bouvard has this chance: she has a family to support, and is the oldest and honestest dealer in the Temple."

"Look here! my charming little lady," said she to Rigolette, who was examining several articles with an experienced eye; "here are the things which I mentioned to you: two beds with accompaniments complete, all as good as new; and if you should happen to want an old secretary, cheap, here is one;" and Mother Bouvard indicated the article. "I purchased them all in the same lot. Although I seldom purchase furniture, I could not resist buying this; for the people I bought it of looked so very poor. Unfortunate lady! the sale of this old furniture seemed to make her heart bleed: it was a family relic, I believe."

Hearing these words, while Mother Bouvard was busy in chaffering with Rigolette about some other articles, Rodolphe examined with more particularity the furniture thus designated. It was one of those ancient rose-wood secretaries, almost triangular in shape, opening with a large lid in front, which falling down, was upheld by two brass supports, and served as a table to write upon. In the middle of the lid, inlaid with wood of various colors, Rodolphe observed a monogram in ebony, composing the letters M. and R., entwined together and surmounted by the crest of a count. He supposed that the last owner of the furniture must have belonged to an elevated rank in society; and his curiosity increasing, he observed the furniture with still closer attention. He examined, with affected indifference, the different drawers, one after the other; but finding it difficult to open the last, and seeking the cause of the obstacle, he discovered and drew forth with great precaution, a sheet of paper, which had been caught between the drawer and the bottom of the secretary. While Rigolette was concluding her bargains with Madam Bouvard, Rodolphe examined his discovery with great curiosity. In spite of the numerous erasures, the import of what was evidently an unfinished letter could be made out.

With great difficulty, Rodolphe succeeded in reading the following sentences:

"SIR—

"I hope you will be persuaded, that the most terrible calamities alone could force me to the step which I have taken. It is not a fastidious taste which causes these scruples, but the total absence of any claim upon you for the service which I solicit. The spectacle of my daughter, like myself, reduced to abject poverty, has overcome all my hesitation. I will explain in a few words the cause of the disasters which overwhelm me.

"At the death of my husband, I had left to me 300,000 francs, which my brother had deposited in the hands of Jacques Ferrand, a notary. Through the agency of my brother, I received at Angers, where I had retired, the income of that amount of money. You are aware, sir, of the terrible event which terminated his life: ruined, as it appears, by unsuccessful speculation, he killed himself about eight months since. At the time of that fatal catastrophe, I received a few lines written in his despair: before I should have read them, he said, he would have ceased to exist. He concluded his letter by informing me, that he had no voucher for the sum deposited with Mr. Jacques Ferrand, that he had never taken any receipt; for the man was the impersonation of piety and honor, and it would only be necessary for me to present myself to him to insure the surrender of the sum.

"When I was in a situation to think of anything but the awful death of my brother, I came to Paris; where I was acquainted with no one but yourself, and even with you, but indirectly, by means of your business transactions with my husband. As I have told you, the sum deposited with Mr. Jacques Ferrand, constituted my entire fortune, and my brother every six months remitted to me the interest thereof. More than a year had now passed since the last instalment; I therefore presented myself to Mr. Jacques Ferrand, to ask him for a payment, of which I was in the greatest want.

"Hardly had I mentioned my name, when, without any delicacy or respect for my sorrow, he accused my brother of having borrowed of him 2,000 francs, which was lost by his death; adding, 'that suicide was not only a crime in the sight of God and man, but was moreover a swindling operation, of which he, Mr. Jacques Ferrand, was the victim.'

"This insulting language filled me with indignation. The perfect integrity of my brother was well established; he had, it is true, unknown to me and the rest of his friends, lost his fortune in hazardous speculations, but he had died with an untarnished reputation; leaving behind him no debt but that which was claimed by the notary.

"I replied to Mr. Ferrand, 'that I gave him authority at that very instant, to take from the 300,000 francs deposited with him, the 2,000, which he alleged was due from my brother.' At these words, he looked at me with a glance of amazement, and asked 'To what 300,000 francs I alluded?' 'The sum which my brother placed in your hands eighteen months ago: the interest of which has been regularly forwarded to me, through his hands,' I replied, not comprehending the full import of his question.

"The notary shrugged his shoulders, smiled as if I had been jesting, and replied, 'That instead of having placed money in his hands, my brother had borrowed of him 2,000 francs.'

"I cannot express to you my astonishment, at this reply. 'But what has become of the sum, then?' I exclaimed. 'My daughter and myself have no other means of subsistence; if that is taken away, nothing remains before us but poverty and misery. What will become of us?

"'I know nothing about it,' replied the notary, unconcernedly. 'It is probable that your brother, instead of placing it in my hands, lost it in those dangerous speculations in which, unknown to any one, he was engaged.'

"'It is false, it is an infamous lie!' said I; 'my brother was honesty itself. Far from leaving destitute myself and my daughter, he would have sacrificed himself for our sake. He always refused to marry, in order that his own property might descend to my daughter.

"'Do you dare to pretend, madam, that I am capable of disowning any deposit left in my hands?' said the notary, with an air of such sincere and honest indignation, that I replied, 'No, sir: your probity is well known; but I dare not impeach my brother with such a cruel abuse of confidence.' 'What title have you to show, in order to reclaim the sum?' 'Not any, sir,' I replied; 'eighteen months ago my brother, who was kind enough to take charge of my affairs, wrote to me, "I have found an excellent place to invest your money, at six per cent. interest; send me a power of attorney to sell your property, and I will deposit 300,000 francs with Mr. Jacques Ferrand, a notary."' I sent the power to my brother, and within a few days he wrote to me that the deposite was made, and in your hands; that you had not given him a receipt. After the lapse of six months, he sent me the interest which was due.'

"'But have you any letters from him on that subject?' said he.

"'No, sir: they were merely business letters, and I did not preserve them.'

"'I am very sorry, but I cannot do anything to assist you,' replied the notary. 'If my probity was not above suspicion, I would say to you, the tribunals are open to you, attack me; the judges will have to decide between the word of an honorable man, who for thirty years has enjoyed the esteem of all good men, and a declaration only made public after his death, of a man, who, having ruined himself by the most foolish speculations, found his only refuge in suicide. I should say to you, madam, attack me, and the name of your brother will be dishonored. But I think you will have the good sense to submit to a misfortune which, great as it is, I had no instrumentality in producing.'' 'But, sir, I am a mother,' said I; 'if this property is taken from me and my daughter, we have nothing left but our humble furniture; and that being sold, nothing but frightful poverty is before us.'

"'You have been duped, madam; your brother has deceived you; it is a misfortune which I cannot alleviate. If you hesitate between his word and mine, attack me; the tribunals will decide.' I left the notary's house with my heart almost broken. Without any evidence to prove the validity of my claim, convinced of the strict integrity of my brother, confounded by the assurance of Mr. Ferrand, having no person to whom to address myself, or solicit advice—you were travelling at that time—knowing that money is requisite to procure legal aid, and anxious to preserve carefully the trifle which was left to me, I dared not commence such a suit. It was then that——"

The letter stopped suddenly. Unintelligible erasures concealed the few lines which followed. At the bottom, near the corner of the letter, Rodolphe read this memorandum:

"*Write to the Duchess de Lucenay.*"

Rodolphe remained pensive after reading this fragment of a letter.

Although this new infamy with which Jacques Ferrand was accused, was not proven, the man had shown himself so merciless in his dealings with the Morels, so infamous in his conduct toward Louise, that this repudiation of a deposite, which could be done with perfect impunity, produced no emotion of surprise. The lady who claimed this property which had so mysteriously disappeared, was undoubtedly accustomed to ease and affluence. Ruined so suddenly, knowing no person, as the letter declared, to whom she could apply, what must be the situation of these two females, left alone in the midst of this great city? Rodolphe, as the reader is aware, had promised to devise some charitable intrigue for the Marchioness d'Harville, and for the purpose of occupying her mind, to assign her some part to play in a prospective work of charity, under the assurance that he would find some poor people to relieve, before his next interview with the Marchioness.

Accident had now placed him on the track of some noble misfortune, which would assist his project of engaging by works of benevolence the imagination and the heart of the Marchioness.

This draft of a letter, the copy of which had probably never been sent to the person whose assistance it implored, gave indications that its author was haughty and resigned—one who would revolt at receiving alms. Much precaution, care and delicacy, and many *ruses* would be necessary, in order really to ascertain whether she actually deserved the interest which she seemed apparently to merit. Rodolphe anticipated a variety of novel, curious and touching emotions, which would furnish to the Marchioness the amusement which he had promised her.

"Well, *husband*," said Rigolette to Rodolphe, "what is that manuscript which you are reading?"

"You are very inquisitive, my little *wife*," replied Rodolphe: "I will explain it to you at some other time. Have you concluded your purchases?"

"Certainly, I have; and your protegés will be established in housekeeping like princes. All that remains to be done is to pay. I must do Madam Bouvard the justice to say that she is very accommodating."

"An idea strikes me, my little wife: while I pay this bill, suppose that you go and purchase some clothes for Madam Morel and the children. I confess my incapacity to select such articles. You will instruct them to send to this place whatever you may purchase: everything can then be carried by the same conveyance, and all the necessities of our friends will be supplied at once."

"Your ideas are invariably good, my husband. Wait for me; I will return in a few moments. I know two individuals of whom I am a regular customer: I shall find in their shops everything that is necessary;" and Rigolette departed. She, however, turned her head to say:

"Madam Bouvard, I leave my husband in your charge: don't be making love to him."

And she disappeared, laughing as usual.

CHAPTER XV. ..... DISCOVERY.

"You must acknowledge, sir," said Madam Bouvard to Rodolphe, after Rigolette had departed, "you must acknowledge

that you have an excellent little housekeeper. Good Heaven! how close she is at a bargain; and how pretty withal, rosy and fair, with large black eyes, and hair of the same color: such beauty is very rare."

"Is she not pretty, Madam Bouvard? Am I not a fortunate husband?"

"As fortunate a husband as she is a wife; I am sure of that——"

"You are not in much of an error. But pray tell me how much I owe you."

"I could not make your little wife give but three hundred and thirty francs for all that she has purchased; and, true as I am alive, all my profits amount to only thirteen francs, for I did not purchase these articles as cheap as I might have done. I had not the heart to chaffer, the poor people who sold them looked so unhappy."

"Indeed! are they the same people from whom you purchased the secretary?"

"The same, sir. Oh! really it breaks my heart to think of it. Just imagine, that the day before yesterday, a lady came here still young and handsome, but so pale and emaciated that it was painful to look at her. We understand these things: although she was exceedingly neat in her appearance, an old threadbare woollen shawl, a black bombazine dress, thoroughly worn, a straw bonnet in the middle of January—the lady was in mourning—all announced what we call distinguished poverty. I am sure she is a lady of elevated rank. At length she asked me, in a confused manner, if I wished to buy two beds with garniture complete, and also a small secretary. I replied, that since I sold I was of course compelled to buy; that if the articles gave me satisfaction, the trade would soon be concluded, but that in the first place I must see them. She then asked me to go to her house not far from this place, beyond the boulevard, on the quay of the canal Saint Martin. I left my shop in charge of my niece, and I followed the lady; and we arrived at a house for poor folks, as we say, at the end of the yard. We ascended five pair of stairs and the lady knocked. A young girl, very pale and thin, opened the door. She also wore mourning, and was so exceedingly beautiful that I was overcome with astonishment."

"And who was this beautiful girl?"

"She was the daughter of the lady in mourning; and notwithstanding the cold weather she was clothed in a miserable black cotton dress, with white spots, and a small mourning shawl, quite worn out. That was all that she had on."

"Did their room indicate poverty?"

"Imagine, sir, two small rooms, very neat, almost destitute of furniture, where no fire had been for a long time, so that it was cold enough to freeze one to death. The entire furniture consisted of two beds, two chairs, an old bureau, an old trunk, and that little secretary. On the trunk there was a small bundle in a silk handkerchief, which contained all that the mother and daughter possessed in the world, after the sale of their furniture. The landlord seized for his rent, the bedsteads, chairs, trunk, and table, as the porter informed me who went up stairs with us. The lady asked me very civilly to fix a price to the mattresses, sheets, curtains, and blankets. Upon the word of an honest woman, sir, although it is my business to buy cheap and sell dear, yet when I saw the young lady with her eyes filled with tears, and the mother, who seemed to weep in her heart in spite of her composure, I valued the assortment within fifteen francs of their real worth. I assure you it is the truth. I even consented to take this secretary, in order to oblige them, although it is entirely out of my line."

"I will buy it of you, Madam Bouvard."

"I am glad to sell it, for I thought it would remain for a long time in my shop. I only purchased it in order to confer an obligation upon the poor lady. After I told the price which I placed upon her articles, I expected that she intended to ask for more, but she did not, and I judged from that circumstance also, that she was no ordinary woman—a case of distinguished poverty; you may be sure of it, sir. I told her, that her articles were worth so much; she replied, 'Very well; let me go back to your shop, and you can pay there, for we do not intend to return to this house.' She then said to her daughter, who was seated upon the trunk, weeping; 'Claire, take the bundle.' I remember well that the name was Claire. The young lady arose, but when she passed in front of the old secretary, she knelt down, sobbing violently. 'My child, have courage,' said the mother, in a low voice: 'the eyes of strangers are upon us;' so that you will understand, sir, that although they are poor, they are proud. When the lady gave me the key of the small secretary, I saw a tear in her eye. It seemed to me that her heart would break in parting from this piece of old furniture, but she exerted herself to appear composed and dignified in our presence. At length, she informed the porter that I would come and carry away all that the landlord left, and we returned to this place. The young lady gave her arm to her mother, and carried the little bundle which contained their entire fortune. I paid them three hundred and fifteen francs, and have not seen them since."

"But what is their name?"

"I do not know. The lady sold me the articles in the presence of the porter. I had no occasion to inquire her name. What she sold was certainly her own."

"But where is her new place of residence?"

"I do not know."

"Is she not known at the house where she last resided?"

"No, sir. When I returned there, for the purpose of removing the articles which I had purchased, the porter told me 'that the lady and her daughter were very quiet, respectable, and unhappy people. I hope nothing unfortunate will happen to them,' he said. 'They appear calm, but I fear that despair is in their hearts.' 'But where are they going to live now?' I asked of him. 'I know nothing about it,' he replied; 'they left without informing me of it, but I am sure that they will not return.'"

The hopes which Rodolphe had cherished, now vanished away. How was it possible for him to discover the two females? He had no clue to trace them by, except the name of the young lady, Claire, and the draft of the letter on which this memorandum was made: "Write to the Duchess de Lucenay."

The sole and very feeble chance of discovering these two unfortunate beings, was a resort to the Duchess de Lucenay, who was fortunately an acquaintance of the Marchioness d'Harville.

"Here, madam, pay yourself," said Rodolphe, giving her a note for five hundred francs.

"I will give you the change, sir."

"Where can I find a cart to convey these articles?"

"That of father Jereme's is near here. He is my usual porter. What is your direction, sir?"

"Rue Temple, No. 17."

"Rue Temple, No. 17! I am well acquainted with the house."

"Have you ever been there?"

"Oh, yes, several times. In the first place, I have bought clothes of a pawnbrokeress who lives there; her profession, to be sure, is not a very honorable one, but that is none of my business; she sells and I buy. I went there also, about six weeks ago, to examine the furniture of a young man who was about to move."

"Mr. François Germain, perhaps?" said Rodolphe.

"Precisely. Do you know him?"

"Very well: but unfortunately, he did not leave with me the direction of his new residence. I do not know where to find him."

"If that is all, I can afford you the information."

"Do you know where he lives?"

"Not exactly where he lives, but I know where you can find him."

"Where?"

"At the notary's who employs him."

"A notary?"

"Yes, a notary in the rue du Sentier."

"Mr. Jacques Ferrand!" exclaimed Rodolphe.

"The very same," said the woman; "a very pious and holy man; he has a crucifix and consecrated laurel in his office; it smells like a vestry."

"But how did you find out that Mr. Germain was employed by the notary?"

"It is quite a long story. The young man came here to propose to me to buy all of his furniture. At this time also, I bought all he had to sell, although out of my usual line; for it seemed to be an accommodation to the young man, and I could not refuse him. I purchased then the whole of his bachelor establishment, and paid him for it. He was probably pleased with my treatment, for in the course of two weeks he returned here to buy some bedding. A porter with a small hand-cart accompanied him; the whole was packed up together, but just as he was going to pay, he discovered that he had left his purse behind him. He had such an honest appearance, that I told him to take away what he had purchased and I would call upon him for the price. 'Very well,' said he, 'but as I am seldom in my rooms, call to-morrow at the house of Mr. Jacques Ferrand, a notary, rue du Sentier, where I am employed, and I will pay you.' I went there the next day, and he paid me. What seems to me singular is, that he sold his furniture and within a fortnight bought more."

Rodolphe thought that he understood the reason of this singularity. It was probably the intention of Germain to cut off all traces by which the wretches in pursuit of him could ascertain

his new place of abode; fearing that the conveyance of his furniture might serve as a guide, he preferred to sell his movables and afterward replace them.

Rodolphe was transported with joy at the thought of the happiness of Madam George, in having a son returned to her arms from whom she had been so long separated, and whom she had so diligently sought in vain.

The smiling countenance of Rigolette now drew near.

"Well, well; when I told you," said she, "the price we should have to pay, I was not mistaken; we have expended six hundred and forty francs, and the Morels will be fitted out like princes. Look, look: here come the dealers; have they not a heavy load? nothing will be wanting for the comfort of the family; everything is coming; a gridiron, two fine sauce-pans well tinned, and a coffee-pot. I said to myself, 'since they wish us to do things in a grand style, let us do it in a grand style,' and after all, I have scarcely lost three hours. But hurry quick, and let us go; it will soon be noon, and my needle will have to fly fast to compensate for the loss of this morning."

Rodolphe paid the bill and left the Temple in company with Rigolette.

CHAPTER XVI. ..... AN AFFARITION.

At the time that Rodolphe and the grisette were about entering the alley of their own house, they were nearly prostrated by Madam Pipelet, who was running in great apparent terror.

"Good Heaven! Madam Pipelet," said Rigolette; "what is the matter with you? where are you running so fast?"

"Is this you, Mademoiselle Rigolette," exclaimed Anastasia; "it must be a kind Providence who has sent you to help me save Alfred's life."

"What do you mean?"

"My poor old beloved has fainted; have mercy upon us! for Heaven's sake run and buy two sous' worth of absinthe, the strongest you can get; that is always his remedy for sickness at the stomach, it will perhaps bring him to; hasten, hasten; do not refuse me, so that I can return to my dear Alfred; I am frightened to death."

Rigolette forsook Rodolphe's arm and ran to the wine cellar.

"But what can have happened, Madam Pipelet?" said Rodolphe, following the portière into the lodge.

"How can I tell, my good sir? I had gone to the Mayor's, to the church, and to the restaurateur's, in order to save Alfred these walks; and when I came back, what did I behold! my old beloved prostrate upon his back. Do look, Mr. Rodolphe," said the portière, opening the door of the lodge; "is it not enough to break my poor heart!"

Awful sight! Alfred was seated upon the floor leaning against the bed. The everlasting hat was crushed over his eyes, in which position it had undoubtedly been forced by violence, for there was a fracture on its side. He was evidently emerging from his fainting fit, for he made gestures with his hands as if he would repel some disagreeable object, and then tried to remove his temporary visor.

"He moves! that's a good sign; he must be coming to," said the portière; and bending over she cried in his ear, with a loud voice, "What ails you, Alfred? 'tis your 'Stasia that speaks. How do you do? they will bring you some absinthe; that will revive you, my old dear." Then, with a voice lapsing into the most affectionate whine, she said, "They have stabbed him—they have murdered him—the darling of his mother!"

Alfred heaved a deep respiratory sigh, and uttered, with a most distressing groan, the awful name "Cabrion!"

And his trembling hands repulsed some frightful vision.

"Cabrion again, the reprobate painter!" exclaimed Madam Pipelet. "Alfred was so disturbed by his dreams of him during the whole of the night, that I am completely black and blue from his kicks. The monster is a perfect nightmare; he not only poisons his peace by day, but he poisons his repose at night. Yes, sir; it Alfred was a malefactor, Cabrion, the devil take him! would be remorse personified."

Rodolphe laughed in his sleeve, suspecting some new trick of the eccentric artist.

"Do answer me, Alfred; your silence frightens your 'Stasia," said Madam Pipelet. "Don't think about that rascal, for you know when you think of him, it has the same effect upon you as cabbage; it remains on your stomach and suffocates you."

"Cabrion!" repeated Mr. Pipelet, lifting the hat which had been crushed over his eyes, which were rolling about in a most bewildered manner.

Rigolette now entered, bringing with her a small bottle of absinthe.

"Thank you, Mademoiselle, you are very kind," said Madam Pipelet, and addressing her husband, added:

"Here, take this, my old beloved; sip this for my sake; it will bring you to."

And Anastasia put the phial to Alfred's lips, that he might drink the absinthe.

Alfred in vain attempted to defend himself, for his wife, taking advantage of his reduced condition, held the head of her victim with a firm hand, and introducing with the other the neck of the phial between his lips, compelled him to drink, and exclaimed triumphantly:

"Now, you are on your legs again, my old beloved!"

Alfred, after wiping his lips with the back of his hand, opened his eyes, raised himself upon his feet, and asked in a bewildered tone:

"Have you seen him?"

"Who?"

"Has he gone?"

"Who do you mean, Alfred?"

"Cabrion."

"Did he dare to come here?" asked the portière.

Mr. Pipelet, as mute as the statue of the Commander in Don Giovanni, moved his head in an affirmative manner.

"Has Mr. Cabrion been here?" asked Rigolette, restraining an almost irresistible propensity to laugh.

"Is not that monster let loose upon Alfred? Oh! had I been here with my broom, he would have had to swallow it, handle and all. But speak, Alfred; tell me your misfortune."

Pipelet indicated with his hand that it was his intention to speak. Most religious silence was observed, while he of the broad-brimmed chapeau spoke these words, in a voice that indicated the depth of his emotion:

"My wife had just left me, to save me the trouble of going to the Mayor's office, according to the directions of the gentleman," bowing to Rodolphe, "and to the church, and to the restaurateur's——"

"Yes, the dear old beloved," broke in Madam Pipelet, "had the nightmare all the night, and I wished to spare him all the exertion in my power."

"That nightmare was a foreshadowing warning from above," continued the porter, devoutly. "I dreamed about Cabrion: I was to suffer by Cabrion. The day commenced by two rascals taking liberties with my wife's person."

"Alfred! Alfred! hold your tongue: it makes me feel very unpleasantly," said Anastasia, with assumed modesty, and casting down her eyes bashfully.

"I thought that the misfortunes of the day terminated with the departure of those voluptuous malefactors," said Mr. Pipelet, "when, gracious Heaven! gracious Heaven!"

"Be calm, Alfred; take courage."

"I will recall my courage," said Mr. Pipelet, heroically, "I will take courage, for I need it. I was then here seated before my table, reflecting tranquilly upon a change which I wished, if possible, to produce in the vamp of this boot intrusted to my skill, when suddenly I heard a noise, a loud beating against the window of my lodge. Was it a presentiment or a warning from above, that caused my heart preternaturally to flutter? I raised my head, and through the glass saw——"

"Cabrion!" said Anastasia, clasping her hands.

"Cabrion!" said Pipelet, drawing a deep breath. "His hideous face was smack against the pane, with his cat-like eyes fixed upon me. What do I say? tiger-like eyes, as I saw them in my dream. I wished to speak; but my tongue and palate were glued together, my extremities adhered to my bench, my boot fell from my hand, and, as in all the trying and critical events in my history, I remained fixed—motionless. The key suddenly turned in the lock, the door flew open, and Cabrion entered."

"Entered? Unparalleled audacity!" exclaimed Anastasia, as terrified as her husband.

"He entered slowly," continued Alfred, "halted for a moment at the door to fascinate me with his diabolical look, then advanced toward me, stopping at each step, grave and silent as a ghost, and piercing me through with his eye."

"Do tell! It makes me bristle up to hear the tale," said Madam Pipelet.

"I remained more and more immovably fastened to my chair: Cabrion continued slowly to advance, having his eye fixed upon me, like a serpent's upon a bird, inspiring me with an awful horror. In spite of myself, I was forced to look at him. As he came close to me, I could no longer endure the frightful vision: I shut my eyes. I then felt him place his audacious hands upon my hat; he takes it by the crown, slowly lifts it from my head, which remains uncovered. A vertigo immediately seized me; my breathing stopped; there was a ringing in my ears, and I was fastened tighter and tighter to my seat. Then Cabrion stooped,

and taking between his death-like hands my head, which I have a right to call—or rather *had* a right to call—venerable, before it was outraged, he fastens upon my brow, bedewed with cold sweat, an insolent kiss—the shameless, lickerish rascal!"

Anastasie raised her astonished and imprecating hands to heaven!

"My most inveterate enemy had the frightful audacity to salute me with a kiss upon my brow, and to force me to endure his disgusting caress, after having persecuted me for a lock of my hair! Such monstrous impudence so overpowered me with reflections, as totally to paralyze my strength. Cabrion took advantage of my stupor to replace my hat upon my head, and crowded it down upon my face, in the manner you saw it when you discovered me. This final outrage was a finishing blow; everything whirled around me; I fainted away, and saw him, beneath the brim of my hat, leave the lodge as slowly and tranquilly as he had entered it."

And, as if exhausted by the narration, Mr. Pipelet fell back upon his seat.

CHAPTER XVI. ..... THE ARREST.

"Holy Mary! Mr. Rodolphe," cried Rigolette, turning pale, and trembling. "There is a police officer and a guard!"

"Divine mercy protect me!" said Mr. Pipelet, in a transport of religious gratitude. "They have come to arrest Cabrion. Unfortunately it is too late."

A police officer, recognized by the scarf that exhibited itself beneath his black coat, entered the lodge. His expression was grave, dignified and severe.

"Mr. Officer, it is too late. The rascal has fled," said Mr. Pipelet, sadly. "But I can give you his description; a diabolical smile, impudent look, manners——"

"Of whom are you speaking?" said the magistrate.

"Of Cabrion, Mr. Officer; but if you hurry, perhaps you can catch him yet," answered Mr. Pipelet.

"I know nothing about this Cabrion," said the magistrate impatiently. "Does Jerome Morel, a working lapidary, live in this house?"

"Yes, my officer," said Madam Pipelet, shouldering arms.

"Conduct me to his apartment."

"Morel, the lapidary?" answered the portière, filled with surprise. "Why, he is the lamb of a good God; he is incapable of——"

"Does Jerome Morel live here? yes or no."

"He does, my officer, in the garret, with his family."

"Conduct me, then, to that garret."

Then addressing himself to the man who accompanied him, the magistrate said:

"Let the two city guards wait below, and not quit the alley. Send Justin in search of a hack."

The man left to execute these orders.

"Now," continued the magistrate, speaking to Mr. Pipelet, "conduct me to Morel's chamber."

"If it is all the same to you, my officer, I will go in the place of Alfred. He feels ill on account of Cabrion, who sits upon his stomach like a cabbage."

"You, or your husband; it makes no difference. Proceed."

And, preceded by Madam Pipelet, he commenced ascending the stairs; but on seeing Rodolphe and Rigolette following him, he stopped.

"Who are you? What do you want?" he asked them.

"They are our two tenants of the fourth story," said Madam Pipelet.

"I ask your pardon, sir. I was not aware that you belonged to the house," he remarked to Rodolphe, who, auguring well from the magistrate's polite manner, replied:

"You are about meeting a family in misfortune, sir. I am am unaware of the new blow that menaces the unfortunate artisan, but to-night he has been most cruelly tried. One of his daughters has died before his eyes from exhaustion and sickness, proceeding from cold and want."

"Can it be possible?"

"It is true, my officer," said Madam Pipelet. "Had it not been for the gentleman with whom you are speaking, and who is the king of tenants, since he saved poor Morel from prison through kindness, the whole family of the lapidary would have died of starvation."

The officer regarded Rodolphe with as much interest as surprise.

"Nothing is more simple," said the latter. "A very charitable person, knowing that the condition of Morel—whose honor and integrity I can vouch for—was as deplorable as it is undeserving, charged me to pay a bill of exchange, on account of which the poor workman, the sole support of a numerous family, was about being dragged by the bailiff to prison."

Struck by the noble physiognomy of Rodolphe, and by the dignity of his manner, the magistrate answered:

"I do not doubt the honesty of Morel. I can only regret that I have to perform a most painful duty, before you sir, who take such a lively interest in the family."

"What do you allude to, sir?"

"After being made aware of the services that you have rendered the Morels, and after listening to your language, I cannot doubt, sir, that you are a gentleman; and having no reason to conceal the object of the commission that I have to execute, I will confess to you that it concerns the arrest of Louise Morel, the daughter of the lapidary."

The recollection of the roll of gold offered to the sheriff by the young girl, came forcibly to Rodolphe's mind.

"Good God! of what is she accused?"

"She rests under an accusation of infanticide."

"She! she! Oh! her poor father!"

"After what you inform me, sir, under the sad circumstances in which the artisan is found, I can conceive how terrible this new blow will be to him. Unfortunately, I must obey the orders which I have received."

"But it is simply an accusation, then?" cried Rodolphe "Without doubt proofs are wanting?"

"I can give no further explanation of the matter. Justice has been put on the path of this crime, or rather, of its presumption, by the declarations of a man in all respects worthy, the master of Louise Morel."

"Jacques Ferrand, the notary!" said Rodolphe, indignantly.

"Yes, sir. But why this indignation?"

"Jacques Ferrand is a villain, sir!"

"I perceive, with regret, that you do not know the person of whom you speak, sir. Mr. Jacques Ferrand is one of the most honorable men in the world; and of an exemplary piety and honesty that is universally admitted."

"I repeat, sir, that this notary is a villain. He wished to imprison Morel because his daughter rejected his infamous propositions. If Louise is accused solely upon the evidence of such a man, admit, sir, that this presumption is of the slightest character."

"It does not belong to me, sir, and besides, it would not be proper for me to discuss, the value of Mr. Ferrand's accusations," said the magistrate, coldly: "justice has the affair in hand, and the tribunals will decide it. As to me, I am required to take the person of Louise Morel, and I am executing my mandate."

"You are right, sir. I regret that a feeling of indignation, perhaps just, made me forget that this, in fact, was neither the time nor the place to raise such a discussion. One word only; the corpse of the child that Morel has lost, remains in the garret. I have offered my apartment to this family, that they might be spared the sight of so sad a spectacle. It is in my room, then, that you will find the lapidary, and probably his daughter. I beseech you, sir, in the name of humanity, do not arrest Louise rudely, in the midst of these unfortunate beings. Just snatched from a most frightful fate, Morel has this night experienced such a terrible shock, that his reason can scarcely resist it. His wife is also dangerously sick. Such a blow will kill her."

"I have already, sir, executed my orders with every possible precaution, under the circumstances. I will continue to do so."

"If you will permit me to ask a favor of you, I would propose to you: the young girl who follows us with the portière, occupies the adjoining chamber to mine; I do not doubt that she will put it at your disposal. There you can first call Louise—then Morel, if it be necessary, that his daughter may bid him farewell. By such a course, you will avoid inflicting upon a poor, sick, and infirm mother, a most heart-rending scene."

"Willingly, sir, if it can be so arranged."

The conversation that we have been relating, took place in an under tone, while Rigolette and Madam Pipelet discreetly remained a few steps distant from the officer and Rodolphe. The latter then approached the grisette, who was trembling at the presence of the officer, and said to her:

"My poor voisine, I must ask another favor of you: I wish to have the free disposal of your chamber for half an hour."

"As long as you wish, Mr. Rodolphe: you have my key. But, my heavens! what is the matter?"

"I will soon inform you. But that is not all: you must do me the kindness to return to the Temple, and request them not to send the articles we purchased under half an hour."

"Very willingly, Mr. Rodolphe. But does another misfortune await the Morels?"

"Alas! yes. A very sad affair has happened: you will know it but too soon."

"Well, my voisin, I am off to the Temple. My Heaven! I who —thanks to you—believed these worthy people out of trouble!" said the grisette; and she descended the stairs rapidly.

Rodolphe wished, above all, to spare Rigolette the sad scene of Louise's arrest.

"My officer," said Madam Pipelet, "since my king of tenants conducts you, I may return and find Alfred. I am uneasy about him: it was but just now that he was troubled with an indisposition on account of Cabrion."

"Go, go," said the magistrate; and he remained alone with Rodolphe.

Both arrived at the landing-place of the fourth story, in front of the door of the room where were provisionally established the lapidary and his family.

Suddenly the door opened.

Louise, pale and in tears, hastily passed out.

"Adieu! adieu! my father," she cried. "We must part; but I will return."

"Louise, my child, listen to me!" answered Morel, following his daughter, and endeavoring to retain her.

At the sight of Rodolphe and the magistrate, Louise and the lapidary remained immovable.

"Ah! sir: you, our benefactor!" said the artisan, on recognizing Rodolphe; "assist me in preventing Louise from leaving us. I do not know what is the matter with her; she alarms me: she wishes to leave. She is not obliged to return to her master—is it not so, sir? Did you not say to me, '*Louise shall never quit you more; that shall be your reward?*' Oh! I confess, that that kind promise made me for a moment forget the death of my poor little Adèle. Never more to be separated from thee, Louise—never! never!"

The heart of Rodolphe almost broke; he could not utter a word in reply.

The officer said harshly to Louise:

"Your name is Louise Morel?"

"Yes, sir," answered the almost speechless girl.

Rodolphe had opened the door of Rigolette's chamber.

"You are Jerome Morel, her father?" added the magistrate, addressing the lapidary.

"Yes, sir; but——"

"Enter there with your daughter."

And the magistrate pointed to Rigolette's chamber, which Rodolphe had already entered.

Assured by the presence of the latter, the lapidary and Louise, astonished and agitated, obeyed the officer, who closed the door, and said to Morel with deep emotion:

"I am aware of your misfortunes, and of the honesty of your character; it is therefore with deep regret that I inform you, in the name of the law, that I have come to arrest your daughter."

"All is discovered! I am lost!" cried the trembling Louise, throwing herself into her father's arms.

"What do you say? what do you say?" said Morel, stupefied. "You are crazy! Why lost? Arrest you! why arrest you? who would come to arrest you?"

"I, in the name of the law;" and the officer showed his scarf.

"Oh! miserable, miserable me!" cried Louise, falling on her knees.

"How in the name of the law?" said the artisan, whose reason, forcibly shaken by this new blow, began to totter; "why arrest my daughter in the name of the law? I answer for Louise, I; she is my daughter—my worthy daughter: is it not true, Louise? Why arrest you, when our good angel restores you to us, to console us for the death of my little Adèle. Go? It cannot be! Besides, Mr. Officer—speaking with all respect—the wicked only are arrested: do you understand? and Louise, my daughter, is not wicked. Certainly, my child, the gentleman is deceived. My name is Morel, but there is more than one Morel; your name is Louise—there is more than one Louise. That's it, you see, Mr. Officer. It is a mistake; certainly it is a mistake.

"Unfortunately, there is no mistake. Louise Morel, bid your father adieu."

"You will rob me of my child, you——" cried the workman, rendered furious by grief, and advancing toward the magistrate in a menacing manner.

Rodolphe seized the lapidary by the arms and said to him:

"Calm yourself; hope; your daughter will be restored to you; her innocence will be proved; doubtless she is not guilty."

"Guilty of what? She cannot be guilty of anything. I would thrust my hand in the fire if—" Then recollecting the gold that Louise had brought to pay the bill of exchange, Morel cried. "But that money! that money of this morning, Louise!"

And he cast upon his daughter a terrible look.

Louise understood it.

"I! steal?" she cried; and her cheeks, flushed by a noble indignation—her accent, her gesture, reassured her father.

"I knew it well!" he cried. "You see, Mr. Officer, she denies it, and through her life she has never lied; my oath upon it. She lie? Ah! she is too proud for that; besides, the bill of exchange was paid by our benefactor. She will not keep the gold; she will return it to the person who loaned it to her, and whose name she is prohibited from mentioning. Is it not so, Louise?"

"Your daughter is not accused of theft," said the magistrate.

"My God! then of what is she accused? I, her father, swear to you, that of whatever she is accused, she is innocent. And for my life, I do not lie."

"What benefit can arise from knowing the accusation?" said Rodolphe to him, moved by his grief. "Louise's innocence will be proved; persons deeply interested, will protect your daughter for you. Come, have courage; and this time Providence will not fail you. Embrace your daughter, you will soon see her again."

"Mr. Officer," cried Morel, without heeding Rodolphe, "do they take from a father his daughter without at least telling him of what they accuse her? I wish to know all. Louise, will you speak?"

"Your daughter is accused of infanticide," said the magistrate.

"I—I—do not understand—I—you——"

And Morel, with a cast-down look, stammered some unmeaning words.

"Your daughter is accused of having killed her child," continued the officer, touchingly moved by the scene; "but it is not yet proved that she committed the crime."

"Oh, no! it is not so, sir, it is not so!" cried Louise with energy, on rising. "I swear that it was dead; it did not breathe, it was cold. I was bewildered; that was my crime. I kill my child! Oh! never!"

"Thy child, wretch!" cried Morel, raising both hands over Louise, as if he wished to annihilate her by his gesture and terrible oath.

"Pardon, my father! pardon!" she cried.

After a moment of frightful silence, Morel continued, in a tone more frightful still:

"Mr. Officer, take away this creature; she is not my daughter."

The lapidary wished to leave the room. Louise threw herself at his knees, which she embraced with both arms; and with her head thrown back, in a distracted and suppliant manner, she cried:

"My father! only hear me—listen to me!"

"Mr. Officer, take her away. I surrender her to you," said the lapidary, while forcibly endeavoring to disengage himself from the clinging embrace of Louise.

"Listen to her," said Rodolphe, stopping him; "do not be unmerciful."

"She! my God! my God! She!" repeated Morel, striking his forehead with both hands. "She dishonored! Oh! infamy! infamy!"

"And if she is dishonored to save you?" said Rodolphe, in a low voice.

These words produced upon Morel a terrible effect; he gazed upon his weeping daughter, still clinging to his knees, and with an interrogating glance, impossible to paint, he uttered in a low tone, while his teeth gritted with rage:

"The notary?"

An answer was upon the lips of Louise. She was about to speak; but reflection arresting her speech, she cast down her head in silence and remained mute.

"But no, he would have imprisoned me this morning," continued Morel. "It is not like him? Oh! so much the better, so much the better; she has no excuse for her error. I am not to blame for her dishonor; I can curse her without remorse."

"No, no! do not curse me, father! To you I will confess all; but to you only; and you will see—you will see, if I deserve your pardon!"

"For pity's sake, listen to her," said Rodolphe to him.

"What will she confess to me? her infamy? It will soon be made public; I will wait."

"Sir," cried Louise, addressing the magistrate, "have pity, and allow me to say a few words to my father, before quitting him, perhaps for ever. And before you, also, our benefactor, I will speak—but only before you and my father."

"I give my consent," said the magistrate.

"Will you then remain insensible? will you refuse this last consolation to your child?" asked Rodolphe of Morel. "If you consider me entitled to the least gratitude for the kindness I have bestowed upon you, grant the prayer of your daughter."

After a moment of stern and melancholy silence, Morel answered, "Let us go."

"But where shall we go?" asked Rodolphe; "your family is with us."

"Where shall we go?" cried the lapidary, with bitter irony; "above, above, in the garret, beside the body of my child; the place is well adapted for such a confession, is it not? Let us go; we will see if Louise dares to lie before her sister's corpse. Let us go!"

And Morel quit the room hastily, with a wandering air, without noticing Louise.

"Sir," said the officer, in an under tone, to Rodolphe: "for the sake of the interest you feel in this unhappy father, do not prolong this interview. You said truly that his reason could not withstand it. But a moment since, his expression was almost that of an idiot."

"Alas! sir! I fear with you, that a new and terrible misfortune will happen. I will hasten, as far as is in my power, this heart-rending separation."

And Rodolphe rejoined the lapidary and his daughter.

As strange and mournful as was the determination of Morel, it was, nevertheless, (thus to speak) influenced by localities. The magistrate consented to await the issue of this interview in Rigolette's apartment. Morel's family occupied Rodolphe's, besides which, there remained only the garret. It was then, to this dismal spot, that Louise, her father, and Rodolphe betook themselves.

CHAPTER XVII. ..... THE CONFESSION.

Gloomy and cruel spectacle.

In the middle of the garret, such as we have described it, there reposed upon the bed of the idiot, the corpse of the little girl, who died that morning; a ragged sheet covered it.

The thin and vivid glare filtrated through the narrow dormar-window, and cast upon the three actors of this scene, its meagre light and shades.

Rodolphe, standing up and leaning backward against the wall, was painfully moved.

Morel, seated upon the edge of his bench, his head cast down, his hands hanging by his sides, his look fixed and stern, kept his eyes steadfastly upon the bed, where were deposited the remains of his little Adèle.

At this sight, the anger and indignation of the lapidary subsided, and changed into an expression of sad and inexpressible bitterness. His energy abandoned him; he was weighed down under this new affliction.

Louise, deathly pale, experienced a feeling of faintness. The revelation she was about to make terrified her. With trembling emotion, she ventured to grasp the hand of her father—that poor emaciated hand, deformed by excessive labor.

He did not withdraw it. And the daughter, choked with sobs, covered it with kisses, and pressed it lightly against her lips. Morel's anger had ceased; and his tears, so long restrained, at length burst forth.

"My father—if you knew," cried Louise, "if you knew how much I lament."

"Oh! it will be to me the sorrow of my whole life, of my whole life, Louise," answered the lapidary, weeping. "Thou, my God! thou in prison, upon the criminal's bench; thou so proud, when thou had'st the right to be proud. No!" he continued, influenced by an excess of grief and despair, "no! I would prefer to see thee under that shroud, by the side of thy poor little sister."

"And I also, would wish to be there," replied Louise.

"Hush, unhappy child! you pain me. I was wrong to speak to thee thus; my mind wandered. Come, speak; but in God's name, do not lie. However frightful the truth may be, let me know it all. In learning it from thee, it will appear to me less cruel. Speak. Alas! the time is limited; below, *they wait*. Oh, just Heaven! thus sad—this sad farewell!"

"My father, I will tell you all," answered Louise, arming herself with resolution. "But promise me, and you, our saviour, also promise me, to repeat it to no one—to no one. If he should know that I had spoken, you see—— Oh!" she added, shuddering with terror, "you would be lost—lost like me, for you do not know the power and ferocity of that man."

"Of what man?"

"Of my master."

"The notary?"

"Yes," said Louise, in a low voice, and looking around her as though she feared being heard.

"Take courage," answered Rodolphe; "the cruelty and power of this man is of little importance; we will encounter him. Besides, if I should reveal what you are about to tell us, it will be solely for your benefit and that of your father."

"And I also, Louise: if I should speak, it would be that I might save thee. But what more has this wicked man done?"

"I have still another request," said Louise, after a moment's reflection. "My relation will concern one who has rendered me a great service; one who is filled with kindness for my father and our family. He was employed at Mr. Ferrand's when I entered his service; he made me swear never to name him."

Rodolphe, presuming that she referred to Germain, said to Louise:

"If you allude to François Germain, quiet yourself, his secret will be carefully kept by your father and myself."

Louise looked at Rodolphe with surprise.

"You know him?" said she.

"What!" said Morel, "was that good, that excellent young man, who lived here for three months, employed at the notary's when you commenced there? The first time you saw him here, you appeared not to know him."

"It was so arranged between us, my father; he had serious reasons for concealing his employment with Mr. Ferrand. It was I who made known to him that the fourth-story room here was to rent, knowing that he would be a good neighbor to you."

"But," said Rodolphe, "who then placed your daughter at the notary's?"

"At the time of my wife's sickness, I informed Madam Burette, the pawnbroker, who lodges here, that Louise wished to obtain employment in some house, for the purpose of assisting us. Madam Burette knew the housekeeper of the notary, and she gave Louise a good letter of recommendation. Cursed, cursed be that letter! it has caused all our misfortunes. You now perceive, sir, how my daughter came to enter the service of the notary."

"Although I am already aware of some of the facts which have occasioned Mr. Ferrand's hatred of your father," said Rodolphe to Louise, "I beg of you to relate to me, as briefly as possible, what has passed between you and the notary since you entered his service. It might serve to clear you."

"During the early period of my stay with Mr. Ferrand," said Louise, "I had no reason to complain of him. I had much work to do. The housekeeper often treated me harshly, and the house was uncomfortable; but I endured everything with patience. Service is service. Besides, it would have made it still more uncomfortable. Mr. Ferrand wore a stern face. He went to mass, and often entertained priests. At first I had no suspicion of him. He scarcely ever noticed me, and spoke to me very harshly; especially before strangers.

"Except the porter—who lodged in front, in that part of the house where the office is—I was the only domestic with Madam Seraphin, the housekeeper. The pavilion that we occupied, was a large ruin, alone by itself, between the courtyard and the garden. My room was above. I was often frightened at remaining always alone during the evening, either in the kitchen, which is under ground, or in my own room. At night, I sometimes fancied that I heard strange and hollow sounds in the story above me, which was uninhabited; and where, only, Mr. Germain frequently worked during the day. Two of the windows of this story were walled up; and one of the doors, which was very thick, was strengthened by plates of iron. The housekeeper told me, that in this place Mr. Ferrand kept his money-chest.

"One night I sat up very late, to do some mending that was pressing. I was about going to bed, when I heard light steps in the gallery, at the end of which was my chamber. They ceased at my door. At first I supposed it was the housekeeper; but as no one entered, I became alarmed. I did not dare to stir. I listened, but heard nothing. I was, however, sure that some one was behind the door. I asked twice who was there; but no one answered. Becoming more and more frightened, I pushed my bureau against the door, which had neither lock nor bolt. I continued to listen, but heard no movement. In about half an hour, which appeared very long to me, I threw myself upon my bed, and passed the night quietly. The next day I asked the housekeeper to have a bolt put upon my door, which had no lock to it; mentioning to her my fears of the previous night. She answered me, that I had been dreaming; and besides, that I must speak to Mr. Ferrand about the bolt. At my request, he shrugged his shoulders and said that I was foolish. I was afraid to say anything more about it.

"Some time afterward, the misfortune of the diamond occurred. My father was in despair, and knew not what to do. I mentioned his sorrow to Madam Seraphin. She replied, 'Mr. Ferrand is very charitable. He will perhaps do something for your father.' The same evening I waited upon the table. Mr. Ferrand said to me, gruffly, 'Your father is in need of 1300 francs. Go to him this evening, and tell him to come to-morrow

to my office, and he shall have the money. He is an honest man, and is worthy of another's interest.' At this mark of kindness, I burst into tears. I did not know how to thank my master. He then said to me, with his usual gruffness, 'It's well, it's well. What I am doing is all very natural.' That evening, after I had finished my work, I came to make known to my father the good news; and the next day——"

"I received the 1300 francs; and for it I accepted a bill of exchange, in blank, at three months' date," said Morel. "I acted like Louise: I wept with gratitude. I called this man my benefactor—my saviour. Oh! how very wicked he must have become, to destroy the gratitude and veneration that I had vowed to him."

"Did not this precaution—his requiring you to accept a bill of exchange at so short a date that you could scarcely be expected to meet it—awaken your suspicions!" asked Rodolphe.

"No, sir; I thought that the notary merely did it for safety, and nothing more. Besides, he told me that I need not think of repaying the money under two years. Every three months I renewed the bill of exchange, for the sake of regularity. Afterward, when it reached maturity, it was presented for payment, and was not paid. He obtained judgment against me, in the name of a third party. But he told me that it need not trouble me: that it was an error of his clerk."

"He wished thus to have you in his power," said Rodolphe.

"Alas! yes, sir; for it was at the date of the judgment that he began to——. But continue, Louise, continue; I do not know where I am; my head whirls—my mind fails me. I shall go crazy! Oh! it is too much—too much!"

Rodolphe quieted the lapidary. Louise continued:

"I redoubled my efforts, that I might be able to evince my gratitude for Mr. Ferrand's kindness toward us. This excited the housekeeper's aversion. She took delight in finding fault with me, and not notifying me of the orders that Mr. Ferrand had given out for me. I endured all these discomforts patiently, although I would have preferred another situation. But the obligation under which my father rested, prevented me from leaving my master. Three months after Mr. Ferrand had lent this money, he recommenced treating me harshly in the presence of Madam Seraphin. Occasionally he would give me a significant look, in such a manner as to embarrass me; and then he would smile, on seeing me blush."

"You understand, sir, at that time he was engaged in having me arrested."

"One day," continued Louise; "the housekeeper went out after dinner, contrary to her usual custom; the clerks who lodged out of the house had left the office, and the porter was sent out by Mr. Ferrand on an errand, while I remained alone in the house with my master. I was working in the antechamber, when he rang for me. I entered his bed-room, and found him standing before the fire-place. I approached him, when he turned round suddenly and seized me by the arms: his eyes sparkled, his face was of the color of blood. I was awfully frightened. Surprise at first prevented me from moving; but notwithstanding his great strength, I struggled so vigorously, that I finally escaped from him and fled to the antechamber, the door of which I pressed to with all my force, the key being on his side of it."

"You hear, sir, you hear!" said Morel to Rodolphe; "such was the conduct of our worthy benefactor."

"In a few moments, the door yielded to his efforts," continued Louise; "fortunately the lamp was within my reach; I had time to extinguish it. The antechamber was at a distance from the room where he was; he found himself all at once in the dark; he called me, but I did not answer. He then said, in a voice trembling with anger; 'If you attempt to escape me, your father shall go to prison for the 1300 francs that he owes me, and cannot pay.'

"I besought him to have pity on me. I promised to do everything in the world to make myself useful, and to show my gratitude for his kindness; but, at the same time, I declared that nothing should compel me to degrade myself."

"*That* was the language of Louise," said Morel; "of my Louise, when she had the right to be proud. But after that—continue, continue."

"I was still remaining in the dark, when I shortly heard the door closed that led from the antechamber to which my master had groped his way. He now had me in his power. He ran to his room and soon returned with a light. I dare not relate to you, my father, the new struggle that I had to undergo, while he pursued me from room to room with threatening menaces. Happily despair, fear, anger, gave me strength; my resistance rendered him furious; he became perfectly frantic; he struck me, and abused me; my face was covered with blood."

"My God! my God!" cried the lapidary, raising his hands to Heaven; "can such crimes exist? is there no punishment for such a monster? none?"

"Perhaps," said Rodolphe, who appeared to be lost in deep reflection. Then addressing Louise, he said: "Tell us all."

"The struggle continued a long time, my strength was abandoning me, when the porter who had returned, rang twice; he brought a letter. Fearing if I did not go for it that the porter would bring it in himself, Mr. Ferrand said to me: 'Begone; speak one word, and your father is lost; if you seek to leave the house, he is lost; if they come to me for a recommendation, I will prevent you from getting another place, by leaving it to be understood, without so affirming it, that you have robbed me. I will say besides, that you are a bad servant.' The day after this affair, notwithstanding his threats, I ran here and told my father all. He would have made me leave the house, but there was the prison. The little that I earned, had become indispensable to the support of the family, since the sickness of my mother; and the bad recommendation with which Mr. Ferrand threatened me, would have hindred me, perhaps, from obtaining another place for a long time."

"Yes," said Morel, with great bitterness; "we had the cowardice, the selfishness, to allow our daughter to return there. Oh! I knew it would be so. Poverty! poverty! of what infamy and disgrace thou art the cause!"

"Alas! my father, did you not try in every way to procure the 1300 francs? You were unsuccessful, and we had to submit to our fate."

"Proceed, proceed. They have been the cause of thy misfortune; but we are more guilty than thou of the evil which has happened to thee," said the lapidary, concealing his face with both hands.

"When I again saw my master," continued Louise, "he treated me with the same roughness and harshness to which he had accustomed me before the occurrence took place that I have been relating; but he never alluded to the past. The housekeeper continued to torment me; the food she allowed me was scarcely sufficient to keep me alive; she locked up the bread, and sometimes, through spitefulness, she would spoil before me the remnants of the meal that was left for me: she always ate with Mr. Ferrand. That night I scarcely slept: I was fearful every moment that the notary would enter my chamber, the door of which could not be fastened. He had compelled me to remove the bureau that I had placed against the door to keep it closed: I had nothing left but a chair, a small table, and my trunk: with these I barricaded it as well as I could, and then threw myself on the bed and slept without undressing. For some time he ceased troubling me; in fact, he scarcely noticed me. I began to feel a little confidence, under the belief that he thought no more of me. One Sunday he allowed me to go out, and I immediately came to announce the good news to my father and mother. We were all very happy. Up to that period, my father, you knew all. That which remains for me to tell you," and Louise's voice trembled, "is frightful. I have ever concealed it from you."

"Oh! I was very certain that you kept from me a secret," cried Morel, with a sort of bewildered air and singular volubility of expression, which astonished Rodolphe. "Thy paleness, thy features, should have explained it to me. A hundred times I said to your mother——but poh, poh, poh! she would quiet my suspicions, and then remark, 'Well, well; to escape a bad fate, let our daughter remain with the monster.' And now, our child, where must she go? to the criminal's bench! Ah! but then, who knows? However—because one is poor, while others——poh, poh!" Then stopping, that he might recall thoughts that had escaped him, Morel struck his forehead, and uttered, "Hold! I no longer know what I say; my head pains me most horribly; I believe I am drunk!" and he concealed his face in his hands.

Rodolphe was anxious to hide from Louise the alarm he experienced at the incoherent language of the lapidary. He remarked gravely:

"You are unkind, Morel. It was not for herself alone, but for the sake of her mother, her children, and for you also, that your poor wife feared the disastrous consequences of Louise's leaving the notary. Accuse no one. Let all your maledictions and all your hatred fall upon that man alone: upon that hypocritical wretch who placed your daughter between the dishonor and the ruin, perhaps the death, of her father and family; upon that master, who abused so infamously his power as a master. But patience; I have told you, that Providence often reserves for crime a vengeance miraculous and frightful."

The words of Rodolphe were stamped, thus to speak, with such a character of conviction and certainty, in speaking of this

providential vengeance, that Louise regarded her protector with a surprise almost amounting to fear.

"Proceed, my child," continued Rodolphe, addressing Louise. "Conceal nothing: every incident is more important than you can imagine."

"I began, then, to feel somewhat encouraged," said Louise; "when one evening, Mr. Ferrand and the housekeeper both went out, separately. They did not dine at home, and I remained alone. As usual, they left me my daily allowance of water, bread, and wine, after having locked up the cupboard. My work being finished, I dined; and then, fearing to remain all alone below, I lit Mr. Ferrand's lamp, and ascended to my room. Whenever he went out in the evening, no one sat up for him. I commenced working, but what was unusual with me, sleep began by degrees to come over me. Ah! my father!" cried Louise, interrupting herself under an emotion of fear, "you will not believe me! you will—you will accuse me of lying! But here, with my hand upon the corpse of my poor little sister, I swear to you that I speak the truth."

"Explain yourself," said Rodolphe.

"Alas! sir; for the last seven months I have endeavored to explain to myself, the events of that frightful night, without success; I was near losing my reason in my efforts to solve the mystery."

"My God! my God! what is she about revealing?" cried the lapidary, arousing from a kind of indifferent stupor, which had affected him at intervals during the recital.

"What had never occurred to me before; I fell asleep upon my chair," continued Louise. "That was the last thing that I remember. Before—before—oh! pardon me, my father! I swear to you, notwithstanding, I am not guilty."

"I believe thee—I believe thee—but speak."

"I do not know how long a time I had slept, when on waking, I found myself still in my room and Mr. Ferrand near me, but more I dare not utter——Alas! it is too true, my father!"

"Thou liest! thou liest!" cried the lapidary, furiously. "Confess that the fear of seeing me dragged to prison, induced thee, but do not lie thus."

"My father, I swear to you ——"

"Thou liest! thou liest! or else, why would the notary have wished to imprison me!"

"No, my father, I do not lie. My sleep was so profound, that I was as if dead. From that hour I have been unable to understand——"

"I understand all," said Rodolphe, interrupting Louise. "Do not accuse your daughter of lying, Morel. Tell me, Louise, whether you did not, before going up into your room, remark a strange taste in what you drank? Endeavor to recall to mind this circumstance."

After reflecting a moment, Louise replied:

"I do remember, in fact, that the mixture of water and wine that Madam Seraphin left for me, as usual, had a slight bitter taste. At the time I paid no attention to it, because the housekeeper had sometimes amused herself, by putting salt or pepper in my drink——"

"And that day the drink appeared bitter to you?"

"Yes, sir; but not sufficiently so, as to prevent me from drinking it. I thought the wine was a little sour."

Morel, with a fixed eye and haggard expression, listened to Rodolphe's questions, and the answers of Louise, without seeming to comprehend their import.

"Before you fell asleep in your chair, did you not feel a sensation of heaviness in your head, and a numbness in your limbs?"

"Yes, sir; my temples throbbed; I felt a slight shuddering, and was exceedingly restless."

"Oh! the wretch! the wretch!" cried Rodolphe. "Do you know, Morel, what this man made your daughter drink?"

The artisan looked at Rodolphe without replying.

"His accomplice, the housekeeper, doubtless mixed in the drink of Louise a soporific of opium, and by that means paralyzed her strength and senses!"

"Ah! now," cried Louise, "my misfortune is explained. You see, my father, I am less guilty than I appeared to be. My father! my father! do answer me."

The look of the lapidary had a fixedness of expression that was truly frightful.

Such horrible depravity could not penetrate the mind of that simple and honest man. He scarcely understood this frightful revelation.

And besides—must it be revealed?—there were moments when his reason escaped him: his mind occasionally became obscured. Then he would fall into that vagueness of thought which is to the intellect what night is to the sight—an almost certain indication of mental alienation.

Morel, however, uttered in a rapid, low and hollow tone:

"Oh, yes: it is very bad—very bad—very bad." And then again fell into his lethargy.

Rodolphe gazed upon him with anxiety. He believed that the violence and energy of indignation had begun to exhaust itself within this poor miserable man, in the same manner that violent grief will check the fountain of tears whose flow would give relief.

Wishing to terminate, as soon as possible, this afflicting conversation, Rodolphe said to Louise:

"Courage, my child. Continue to unravel to us this tissue of horrors."

"Alas! sir, what you have heard is nothing. On seeing Mr. Ferrand near me, I uttered a cry of alarm. I wished to fly, but he held me by main force. I felt so weak, so lethargic, without doubt on account of the drink of which I have spoken to you, that I could not escape from him. 'Why would you save yourself *now*?' said Mr. Ferrand, with an astonished air that confused me. 'Why this caprice? Am I not here with your consent?'

"'Ah! sir; this is infamous!' I cried; 'you have ruined me while I slept! My father shall know it.' At this my master began to laugh. '*I!* ruin you in your sleep! You are joking! Who will believe such a lie! Confess that it was by your own free will. Come, do not be so affected; your father is in my power. Now there is no good reason for resisting me: submit, and we shall be good friends. If not, beware!' 'I will tell my father all!' I cried. 'He shall revenge me: there is law!' Mr. Ferrand looked at me with surprise. 'Will you be so foolish—so mad? What will you tell your father! that I came here with your consent?' Reflect upon it calmly: think how he will receive you. 'Good Heavens! that is not true! you know that it is not true. You came here in spite of me.' 'In spite of you! Will you have the effrontery to utter such a lie? Do you wish a proof of your falsehood? I ordered my cashier, Germain, to return last evening, at ten o'clock, to finish some pressing work. He worked until one o'clock in the morning in the room above this. Would he not have heard the cries, the noise of such a struggle as happened in the room below, vile creature! when you was not as reasonable as you have been today? Ask Germain, to-morrow, and he will admit that the house to-night has been perfectly quiet.'"

"Ah! every precaution was taken that he might act with impunity," said Rodolphe.

"Yes, sir; and I was terrified. To all that Mr. Ferrand said, I could find nothing to reply. Ignorant of the drink that he had caused me to take, I could not explain to myself why I had slept so long. Appearances were against me. If I complained, everybody would accuse me, particularly as that frightful night was to me an impenetrable mystery."

CHAPTER XVIII. ..... THE CRIME.

Rodolphe remained silent and confounded at the frightful hypocrisy of Jacques Ferrand.

"You have never," said he to Louise, "dared to complain to your father of the odious profligacy of the notary."

"No: he would have doubtless believed me the willing victim of Mr. Ferrand. And besides, I feared that in his anger he might forget that his own liberty, and the existence of the family, depended in a great measure, upon my master."

"And probably," continued Rodolphe, to save Louise as much as possible, the agony of a further confession; "probably you have since found the force of imperious circumstances too strong for you to escape from his snare."

Louise cast down her eyes and blushed.

"Was he less brutal in his conduct afterward, toward you?"

"No, sir. In order to divert suspicion from his own infamous conduct, when he happened to have at dinner the curate of Bonne Nouvelle, or his vicar, my master would address me harshly in their presence, and urge the curate to admonish me, for he said that he was sure that sooner or later I should be ruined, for that my manners, with the clerks in his office, were excessively free; that I was very indolent; and that he was only induced to retain me in his service out of charity to my father, an honest man, at the head of a family, whom he was desirous of obliging. All but this last remark was false. I seldom saw the clerks of the office: they were employed in a part of the building unconnected with that in which I worked."

"When you were alone with Mr. Ferrand, how did he explain his conduct toward you, in the presence of the curate?"

"He would assure me that he was only joking. But the curate thought that his observations were serious, for he told

me that depravity was doubly censurable when committed in such a religious family, with such a devout example continually before my eyes.' To these remarks, I knew not what to say. I blushed, and hung my head; my silence and confusion were regarded as proof of guilt. Life was so great a burden to me, that I was often at the point of destroying myself; and I was only induced to tolerate existence by thinking of my father, mother, brother and sisters, who were in some measure dependent on me. And I found this consolation in my shame, that my father was at least saved from prison. A new misfortune now fell upon me. I was conscious that I should soon become a mother, and I gave myself up as totally lost. I know not why it was, but I had this presentiment, that when Mr. Ferrand should discover that I was in a situation which should have secured to me the greatest kindness, that he would really redouble his cruelty and persecutions; yet I was very far from suspecting what would really happen."

Morel having recovered from his temporary aberration, gazed around with a face of astonishment, passed his hand over his brow, and collecting his scattered thoughts, said to his daughter:

"It seems to me that I have wandered—that I have lost myself for a few moments, from fatigue or sorrow. What were you saying, my daughter?"

"When Mr. Ferrand learned my situation——"

The lapidary interrupted her with a gesture of despair.

Rodolphe attempted to soothe him.

"Yes, yes; I will listen. Come; tell us the conclusion. Go on; go on," said Morel.

"I consulted Mr. Ferrand as to the means I should employ to conceal my shame, and the fatal consequences of the crime of which he was guilty. Alas! alas! You will scarcely credit me, my father."

"Well; what happened?"

"Interrupting, with anger and affected surprise, he pretended not to understand what I had said. He asked me 'if I was deranged?' Overwhelmed with affright, I exclaimed, 'Oh, God! what will become of me? Now, if you have no pity for me, show it at least to your child!' 'What a horrible fiction!' exclaimed Mr. Ferrand, raising his hands. 'Miserable wretch! have you the audacity to accuse me of stooping to a person of your class? Are you so impudent—to accuse me of being the cause of your infamous condition? I, who have so often warned you, before the most unimpeachable witnesses, that you would ruin yourself? Leave my house, instantly. I dismiss you, forthwith, from my service.'"

Both Rodolphe and Morel were overwhelmed with horror; completely thunderstruck, by a hypocrisy so infernal.

"I confess," said Rodolphe, "that this recital is beyond my wildest conceptions of the horrible!"

Morel uttered not a word. His eyes stared from their sockets, in a most frightful manner; convulsive spasms contracted his features; he left the bench upon which he sat, and suddenly twitching open a drawer, drew from it a long sharp file, with a handle of wood, and rushed toward the door with the weapon in his hands.

Rodolphe, suspecting his intention, arrested by the arm the abused and wretched father.

"Unhand me," said the artisan, struggling. "I shall commit more murders than one;" and bewildered with grief, he threatened Rodolphe.

"Beware! beware! My father, will you strike our protector, our saviour?"

"Bah! bah! He cares mightily for us. 'T is the notary he wishes to save," said the deranged artisan.

After a moment's struggle, Rodolphe, with gentle violence forced the weapon from the lapidary's hand, and threw it out on the stairs.

Louise hastened to the lapidary, embraced him in her arms, and exclaimed:

"My father! my father! you have raised your hand against our benefactor. Recover yourself—collect your bewildered senses, I pray."

These words seemed to recall the lapidary to himself: he covered his face with his hands, and silently fell at the feet of Rodolphe.

"Rise, rise, most unhappy and wretched father!" said Rodolphe, in great kindness; "have patience to endure but a little longer; I can conceive of your anger, your hatred, your despair; but it is our righteous vengeance, which I beg of you not to destroy."

"My God! my God!" exclaimed the outraged father; "what can justice, what can law do against the wretch! We are poor, and when we appeal to the law against a man who is rich, powerful, respectable, they will laugh in our faces;" and a convulsive ha! ha! ha! a wild maniacal laugh, broke from the tortured lapidary. "Where is our proof? yes, yes; what they call proof! Shall we be believed, credited? no, no," he exclaimed in still wilder fury; "I have no confidence but in the impartiality of the knife."

"Silence, silence! Morel; grief infuriates you," said Rodolphe, with a mournful and authoritative tone. "Let your daughter continue to speak, for the moments are precious; the magistrate is waiting for her. I must know everything; I repeat, everything: proceed, my child."

Morel in an agony of grief, fell back upon his stool.

"It will be idle," continued Louise, "to speak of my grief, my tears, my entreaties; I was struck down by the notary's reply; I was completely annihilated. The incident which I last narrated, took place at ten o'clock in the morning, in the office of Mr. Ferrand. The curate was expected at breakfast on that day, and he entered about the time my master was loading me with reproaches and insults: he appeared to be rather startled by the appearance of the priest."

"And what did he say?"

"His purpose was soon formed; for, pointing to me, he said: 'Well, Abbé, I was right in saying that this miserable girl would be ruined: she is ruined—lost for ever! She has just confessed to me her crime and shame: she has even implored me to save her—the miserable woman, whom, out of pity, I received under my roof!' 'Is it possible,' said the Abbé, 'in spite of the salutary advice which your master has so frequently given you in my presence, that you have degraded yourself to such an infamous degree? Your crime is unpardonable.' And turning to the notary, 'My friend, after the kindness you have shown this miserable creature, out of compassion to her relatives, any further clemency would be a criminal weakness,' said the Abbé, a dupe, like every one else, to the hypocrisy of Mr. Ferrand."

"And why did you not instantly unmask the infamous wretch?" said Rodolphe.

"I was terrified, sir; my head was giddy; I dared not open my lips; I could not utter a word. But I wished to speak to defend myself: 'But, sir,' exclaimed I——'Not one word more,' said Mr. Ferrand, interrupting me; 'you heard the Abbé say, that clemency would be weakness. Within an hour you must leave my house;' and without affording me an opportunity to reply, he withdrew with the Abbé into an adjoining apartment. After Mr. Ferrand had left the room," continued Louise, "I was for a moment lost as in delirium. I saw myself cast out from his house, deprived of the hope of a situation elsewhere, on account of the condition I unfortunately was in, and the bad account which my master would give of my character. I feared that in his wrath he would send my father to prison. I knew not what would become of me—where to go. I went to take refuge and weep in my own room. Within two hours, Mr. Ferrand appeared. 'Have you packed up your clothes?' said he to me. 'Have mercy! Oh, have mercy!' I cried, falling upon my knees; "do not, I pray you, turn me from your house in such a wretched situation. What will become of me? where shall I go? No one will receive me into their house.' 'So much the better,' said the notary: 'God thus punishes your badness and your lies.' 'Do you dare to say that I lie?' I exclaimed with indignation: 'do you dare to deny, that you yourself are the sole cause of my ruin?' 'Leave my house, infamous creature! since you persist in your calumnies,' he exclaimed in a terrible voice; 'and as an additional punishment, to-morrow I will send your father to prison.' 'No, no!' exclaimed I, in affright; 'I will no longer accuse you, I promise it to you; but do not turn me away. Have pity upon my father. The small sum which I earn here, supports the family. I beseech you to keep me in your house. I will not open my lips. I will endeavor to conceal my situation; and when it can be no longer disguised, you may turn me away.'"

"After renewed entreaties, Mr. Ferrand consented to retain me, and I regarded it as a great favor, such a frightful fate was before me! And yet, during the five months which succeeded this torturing interview, I was wretched beyond description, and treated with inhuman cruelty. Mr. Germain, whom I seldom saw, sometimes questioned me as to the cause of my sorrow; but shame closed my lips."

"Was it not about that period, that he took lodgings in this house?"

"Yes, sir: he was anxious for a room in the neighborhood of the rue du Temple, or the Arsenal; and as there was one vacant here, I mentioned to him the room which you now occupy; and as it suited him, he hired it. When he left, about two months since, he begged of me not to mention his new residence, which was known at Mr. Ferrand's."

The necessity imposed upon Germain of escaping from those in pursuit of him, explained this precaution to Rodolphe.

"And did you never think of making a confidant of Mr. Germain?" asked Rodolphe of Louise.

"No, sir; he was also a dupe to the hypocrisy of Mr. Ferrand. He confessed that he was severe and exacting, but he believed him the most honest man in the world."

"Did not Germain, when he lodged in this house, hear your father accuse Mr. Ferrand of attempting to ruin you?"

"My father never spoke of his fears in the presence of strangers; and besides, at that time, I quieted all his anxieties. I comforted him, by saying, that Mr. Ferrand no longer directed a thought toward me. Alas! my poor father! You must pardon those falsehoods. My sole object in telling them, was to alleviate your distress. You see that it was so, do you not?"

Morel spoke not a word. His head was inclined upon his arms, which were crossed upon the table, and he was sobbing most violently.

Rodolphe intimated to Louise not to address her father again, and she thus continued her afflicting narrative:

"I passed those five months in tears and uninterrmitted anguish. By great caution, I had succeeded in concealing my situation from every one; but I could not hope to disguise it for the last term of the fatal period. The future daily appeared more and more frightful to me. Mr. Ferrand had declared that he would no longer retain me in his house. I was about, therefore, to lose this final resort for the sustenance of our family; I should be cursed, and driven from his presence by my father, who, after the deceit I had used to tranquillize his mind, would believe me the willing victim of Mr. Ferrand's guilt. What would become of me? Whither could I fly? Where should I betake myself in my present condition? I entertained at this time a most criminal project, from which I shrank before the period arrived to put it in execution. I make the confession to you, because I am anxious to conceal nothing, even what may be regarded as evidence against me; and also for the purpose of showing you to what extremities I was driven by the inhuman treatment of Mr. Ferrand. Had I yielded to the thought, would he not have been an accessory to the crime which I meditated?"

After a silence of a moment, Louise, with a great effort, continued in a trembling voice:

"I had heard from the portière that there was a quack living in this house, who——"

The poor victim was unable to proceed.

Rodolphe recollected, that at the time of his first interview with Madam Pipelet, he had received from the postman a letter written in a disguised hand, on which he had discerned the traces of tears.

"And you wrote to him, unfortunate child!" said he, "three days ago; on that letter you had dropped some tears and disguised your hand-writing."

Louise looked at Rodolphe with surprise: "How did you learn that!" she asked.

"Be not disturbed. I was alone in the lodge of Madam Pipelet when the letter was brought, and accidentally observed it."

"Well, sir: it was so. In that letter, to which I did not affix any signature, I requested the charlatan to station himself on that same evening near the château d'Eua; I hardly had my senses, and I wished to ask his infamous advice. I departed from the house of the notary with the intention of following any directions which the quack might give me; but my reason soon returning, I became conscious that I was on the road to the commission of an awful crime, and I returned to my room. That very evening, the final calamity of this history of horrors overwhelmed me. Mr. Ferrand supposed that I would be absent for two hours, and was of course unprepared for my sudden return. As I was passing the small garden door, to my surprise, I perceived that it was open. I entered by that way, and deposited the key in the study of Mr. Ferrand, where it was usually kept. The room which was called by that name, was next to his bedroom, and was in the most secluded part of the house. It was here that he held his private audiences; whereas his ordinary business was transacted in the office. You will perceive in a moment why I inform you of all these details. As I was perfectly well acquainted with all parts of the house, after passing through the dining-room, in which there was a lamp, I entered without any light into the parlor, and thence passed into the study, which was next to the bedroom. The door of this last apartment flew suddenly open, at the time I was placing the key upon the table. My master had scarcely perceived me, by the light of the lamp which was burning in his own room, before he quickly closed the door upon some person I did not perceive; and notwithstanding the darkness, rushed upon me with violence, and seizing me by the neck, as if his intention was to strangle me, said to me in a voice which, although low, was furious and agitated: 'You have been eavesdropping, have you? you listened at the door, did you? Pray what have you heard? Answer me—answer me! or I will choke you!' But suddenly, as if altering his intention, without giving me time for one word of reply, he thrust me backward into the dining-room; and the door of the pantry being open, he threw me in with great violence, and locked the door."

"And did you overhear nothing of his conversation?"

"Nothing, sir. Had I been aware that he was in his room with any one, I should have been careful not to approach the study, for this liberty was expressly forbidden to all the household, even to Madam Seraphin."

"After you left the pantry, what did he say to you?"

"It was the housekeeper who came to release me; and I did not see Mr. Ferrand during that evening. The alarm and cruelty which I had experienced, seriously affected my health. The next day as I came down, I met Mr. Ferrand. I trembled at the thought of his previous threats. But what was my surprise to hear him say, in a voice comparatively calm, 'You know that I have forbidden you to enter my study, whenever any one was in my private room. But it will be useless to waste any more words to regulate your conduct during the short period that you are to remain under this roof;' and having spoke these words, he entered his office. This moderation following so close upon the violence of the previous evening, astonished me. I continued my work as usual: I went to arrange his bedroom. During the night, as I have said, I had suffered greatly; and as I was hanging up some clothes, in a dark closet near the alcove, I was seized with a sudden vertigo, and felt that I was about to faint. I naturally sustained myself in falling, by means of a cloak, hanging against the partition; and I drew it down with me and was almost completely covered thereby. When I recovered myself, the glass door of this closet, in the alcove, was closed, and I heard the voice of Mr. Ferrand in conversation. He spoke in a very loud tone. With the scene of the night before still vivid in my recollection, I feared that he would kill me if he perceived the slightest motion. I suppose that the cloak which had fallen over me, concealed me from my master's observation when he closed the door. If he should discover me, I never could have made him credit this almost inexplicable accident. I therefore restrained my breathing, and overheard the termination of a conversation which had probably commenced some time before."

CHAPTER XIX. ..... THE CONVERSATION.

"And who was the individual closeted with the notary?" asked Rodolphe of Louise.

"I do not know, sir; I did not recognize the voice."

"And what did they say?"

"The conversation had been continued for some time, when I recovered my consciousness. This is what I heard said: 'Nothing can be more simple,' said a voice that was unknown; 'a rogue called Bras-rouge, a desperate smuggler, for the purposes of the affair to which I have alluded, has put me in communication with a family of fresh-water pirates,* established at the termination of a small island in the neighborhood of Amiens. They are the most desperate bandits in the world; the father and grandfather have both been beheaded; two of the sons have been sentenced to the galleys for life; but there still remain the mother, three sons and two daughters, who have inherited all the qualities of their deceased kindred. It is said that for the purposes of robbery and plunder, they often land during the night on both sides of the Seine, as high up as Bercy. They are beings of a character who would murder any one for a crown. But we have no need of such services: it is sufficient if they are willing to afford hospitality to your lady of the province. The Martials—such is the patronymic of the pirates—will be regarded by her as a family of honest fishermen. I will, according to your orders, pay one or two visits to this young lady, and will prescribe for her certain potions, and in the course of a week she will become acquainted with the graveyard at Amiens. In the villages, deaths frequently occur without exciting any particular investigation, whereas at Paris a sudden decease excites a thorough examination. But when will you send the young provincial to the Island of Amiens, for it is necessary to inform the Martials of the part they are expected to play.' 'To-morrow she will arrive here; by the day after she will be with them,' replied Mr. Ferrand; 'and I will inform her that, at my request, Doctor Vincent will offer his professional advice.'

* The reader will, in course of time, be made acquainted with the singular life of these Parisian pirates.

'Agreed: I will assume that name—it is as good as any other.'"

"What new mystery of crime and infamy are they designing?" asked Rodolphe, whose surprise increased as the narrative proceeded.

"It was not a new crime: you will see that their conversation had reference to one with which you are already acquainted," said Louise. "I heard a movement of the chairs, and inferred therefrom that the conversation was concluded. 'I do not ask you to maintain an inviolable secrecy,' said Mr. Ferrand; 'you have the same power over me that I have over you.' The other voice replied, 'We are able to render mutual service, and are prevented from exerting our arts to the detriment of each other. To convince you of my zeal, I will inform you, that I only received your letter at ten o'clock last evening, and here I am, early in the morning, prepared to execute your wishes. Good-bye, confederate. Do not forget the Isle of Asniers, the fisherman Martial, and Doctor Vincent. Your provincial lady will be under obligation to those three magical names, for a speedy termination of her career.' 'Wait,' said Mr. Ferrand; 'let me go and pull the bolt, which, out of precaution, I have placed on the door of my study; and let me see also if there is any one in the antechamber, that you may not be prevented from returning through the alley of the garden, the way you came in.' Mr. Ferrand now retired for a few moments, but he speedily returned, and I heard him departing with the man with whom he had been conversing.

"You can imagine my terror, sir, during this conversation, and my surprise at being the forced *confidante* of such a secret. Two hours afterward, Madam Seraphin came to my room, whither I had gone in great agitation, and seriously unwell. 'Mr. Ferrand wishes to see you,' said she; 'you have much better fortune than you deserve. Come down quickly. You are very pale now, but what he is about to tell you will bring some color to your cheeks.' I followed Madam Seraphin. Mr. Ferrand was in the study, and I shuddered involuntarily at the sight of that man: and yet he looked milder than usual. He fixed his eye upon me, as if he would penetrate my thoughts, and my own dropped almost instinctively. 'You look quite ill,' said he. 'Yes, sir,' I replied, astonished at the kindness of his tone. 'It is very easily explained,' said he; 'your sickness results from your situation, and the efforts you have made to conceal it; but, in spite of your lies, your infamous conduct, and your indiscretion last evening, my heart is touched with some compassion for you,' said he, in a gentle tone. 'It will be impossible for you to maintain this disguise for more than a few days longer. Although I was compelled to treat you as you deserved in the presence of the curate of the parish, still, as the event to which I allude would be a disgrace to a house as sanctified as mine, and would bring despair and distress into your own family, I have concluded, in order to avert these calamities, to afford you my assistance.' 'Oh, sir!' I exclaimed, 'such words of kindness from your lips compel me to forget the past.' 'Forget what?' he said, harshly. 'Nothing, nothing. Pardon me,' I replied, through fear of irritating his present kind temper toward me. 'Listen to me, then,' he added: 'to-morrow you must inform your father, that it is my intention to send you into the country for two or three months; that I have a house which I have just purchased there, which I wish you to arrange; and that, during your absence, I will send to him the wages which will be due to you. I will give you letters to Madam Martial, the mother of an honest family of fishermen, who reside near Asniers. You will be careful to say that you come from the provinces, without entering into further particulars. You will learn, on some other occasion, the reason of this precaution which I suggest. The mother of the family will display toward you all the kindness and attention which she would show to a daughter. A medical friend of my own, Dr. Vincent, will afford you the professional advice and attendance which your situation demands; and you will soon have abundant evidence of my charitable intentions toward you.'"

"What an infamous plot!" exclaimed Rodolphe. "The mysterious conversation is now as clear to me as noonday. Fearing that upon the previous evening you might have surprised a secret of terrible import, he wished to silence your tongue for ever; and he probably intended to mislead his accomplice, by pretending that you were a lady from the provinces. How startled you must have been at this murderous design!"

"It produced an awful impression upon me. I was so wild with surprise and fear that I could not open my lips. I looked at Mr. Ferrand with terror: my senses were bewildered. I was upon the point of putting my life into additional jeopardy, by informing him, that I had overheard in the morning his infamous plan; but the new danger to which such a confession would expose me occurring to my mind, I placed restraint upon myself. 'Do you not understand me?' he finally exclaimed, with great impatience. 'Yes, sir, I do,' said I, trembling with agitation; 'but I prefer not to go into the country.' 'Why not? You will be kindly treated at the place which I propose.' 'No, no: I will not go; I choose to remain in Paris and not be separated from my family.' 'Do you positively refuse?' said Mr. Ferrand, smothering his rage, and looking at me with fixed attention. 'Why have you so suddenly changed your mind? You accepted the place a short time since.' I was aware that his suspicions were awakened; and that if he should succeed in penetrating my thoughts, that I was lost for ever. I replied, that 'I did not then know that it would be necessary to leave Paris, and be separated from my family.' 'But you have dishonored your family, miserable woman!' said he; and losing all self-command, he seized me by the arm, and pushed me with such violence as to prostrate me upon the floor. 'I will give you until to-morrow,' said he; 'but then, you must leave this house for the protection of the Martials, or go and inform your father that I have discharged you, and that he will be immediately sent to prison.' I remained there stretched upon the floor, for I had not strength to rise. Madam Seraphin appeared when she heard her master's voice raised in an angry tone, and with her assistance, I succeeded, step by step, in reaching my room. I threw myself upon my bed; I remained upon it till night. These repeated shocks and aggravated violence, produced such a terrible effect upon me, that I was seized with the pains of premature labor."

"Why did you not cry for aid!"

"I dared not do it. Mr. Ferrand was anxious to get rid of me; and he would certainly have employed that infamous Doctor Vincent to have me murdered at my master's house, instead of poisoning me at the Martials. I feared also that Mr. Ferrand might strangle me, and allege that I died in childbed. Perhaps, sir, such fears were foolish, but I could not withstand them; if I could have resisted them, I should have braved exposure, and escaped the awful accusation which has been brought against me. No, no! So far from imploring aid, I smothered even the cries of agony, by grasping with my teeth the covering of the bed. After anguish, which defies all language to describe; unattended—alone in the silence and utter darkness of the night, I gave birth to a child, whose trembling spark of life was extinguished by such a frightful advent. I did not kill it! As true as there is a God in heaven, I did not murder my child! No! oh, no! The tortures of that almost endless night, were relieved by one throb of bitter joy, as I clasped my offspring in these arms." And the voice of the most wretched girl was stifled by her sobs.

Morel had listened to this dreadful tale, with an indifference and an apathy which terrified Rodolphe. But seeing his daughter melted into tears, the lapidary, whose head was still reclining upon the table, with his hands pressed against his temples, fastened upon Louise a glaring eye, and said, "She weeps—she weeps!" and after a moment of vacant hesitation, added, "Why—why does my daughter weep? Ah! yes, yes; I remember—the notary—I know! Proceed, my poor Louise; you are my child—I love you still. A moment since, my eyes were so darkened by tears that I did not know you. My God! what an awful pang shoots through my brain!"

"You see—you see, that I am not guilty, my father!"

"Yes, yes! I see—I see it."

"It is a sad misfortune—but I was so terrified by the notary."

"Yes, yes! the notary: he is a wicked man. I believe him very wicked."

"But you will forgive me, my father?"

"Yes."

"Without reserve?"

"Without reserve. Oh! I shall always love you—although—you see—because—I cannot say—— Oh! my head! my head!"

Louise turned toward Rodolphe with a glance of alarm.

"Your father suffers greatly; but do not speak to him, and he will become calm. Proceed with your story."

Louise cast several anxious glances at Morel, and thus continued:

"I pressed the new-born infant to my bosom. I was surprised not to hear it breathe; but consoled myself with the thought that the breathing of so small a creature was too gentle to be heard. Its unnatural coldness next alarmed me. I would have given worlds for a light, but I never was allowed one. I longed for the appearance of day, and tried to impart warmth to its motionless form, but it seemed to grow colder and colder. I said to myself, that it must be the intense cold which has

benumbed it thus. When daylight appeared, I drew near the window with my infant. I gazed upon it—'twas cold and icy. Upon its little heart I placed my hand—'twas motionless. The child was dead." Louise melted into tears.

"How can I describe the agonizing thoughts of that terrible moment? the sequel only lingers in my memory, like a vague and confused dream. Mingled emotions of fear, despair, rage, took possession of my mind. A new terror banished all other alarms. I feared that, if the infant was found dead by my side, I should be accused of its murder. To conceal the remains of the lifeless being from every eye, was now the sole object of my thoughts. I should then escape the dreadful anger of my father—the fearful vengeance of the notary—since I should be released from his slavery, and find, in employment elsewhere, a support for my family. These were the reasons which forced me to conceal the birth and lifeless body of my child. It was wrong, undoubtedly; but with all the calamities that threatened me, delirious with agony of body and anguish of mind, I could not anticipate the horrible suspicions to which I was exposing myself."

"What torture! what torture!" exclaimed Rodolphe, unable to suppress his feelings.

"The light of day was rapidly increasing," continued Louise; "within a few moments, those who now slept would be awake. I could hesitate no longer. I enveloped the lifeless remains in such a shroud as I could provide in this terrible exigency, and descended softly and quietly the stairs. I had intended to dig at the bottom of the garden, its grave; but the ground was frozen so hard by the severe frost of the previous night, as to prevent me. I concealed the body in a sort of cellar which was used as a kind of conservatory, and which was very seldom entered during the winter. I covered the body of my poor child with an empty flower-box, and stole back to my room unobserved. But a confused remembrance of the whole scene lingers in my mind. In my weak and suffering condition I cannot now comprehend how I had the strength and the courage to perform these frightful obsequies.

"At nine o'clock Madam Seraphin came to my room, to learn why I had not got up. I informed her that I was so unwell, that I begged she would allow me to remain in bed during the rest of the day; since, by Mr. Ferrand's orders, I was to leave the house to-morrow. Within a short time the notary himself appeared. 'I observe you are more unwell,' said he; 'tis the result of your obstinacy: if you had only profited by my kind intentions, you might now have been settled with honest people, who would show you every attention. But I will not be so uncharitable as to leave you in such a dangerous situation without medical advice: this evening Dr. Vincent will attend you.' I trembled with fear at this threat, and I replied to Mr. Ferrand, that I had become aware that I was wrong in refusing his kindness yesterday, but that I would now accept it, and thought that I should be sufficiently recovered to go to the Martials, day after to-morrow, and that it would be useless to send for Doctor Vincent this evening. I was only desirous of gaining time. I had determined to leave the house and return to my father, with the hope that all which had passed would be concealed. Reassured by my promise, Mr. Ferrand, for the first time in his life, was almost affectionate toward me, and commended me to the care of Madam Seraphin. I passed the day in a state of incessant agitation, lest some accident should bring to light the corpse of my child. My only hope was that the weather might become milder, that I might be able to bury my infant in the earth. I was somewhat encouraged by a slight fall of snow. During the entire day I remained in bed. Night having arrived, I waited until the whole household had retired. I rallied sufficient strength to rise from my bed and bring an axe from the wood-pile, in order to dig a grave in the ground, which was covered with snow. After great difficulty I succeeded in accomplishing my object. I took the infant in my arms—I bedewed it with tears. As I was ignorant of the service for the dead, I repeated over it a *pater* and an *ave:* I besought my God to receive the poor child into his blissful Paradise. I inclosed it in the flower-box; but I thought my courage would fail me when I covered the coffin with the cold earth! A mother burying her own child! At length I accomplished this heart-rending task. How hard it was for me to perform! I covered the earth with snow, so that no traces might be discovered. The light of the moon assisted my melancholy labors, and I could scarcely tear myself from the grave. Poor infant! under the frozen earth, covered with the cold snow, I could hardly believe that, although dead, it was insensible to the cold. I finally returned to my room, and retired to my bed in a violent fever. In the morning Mr. Ferrand sent to inquire respecting my health. I replied that I was better, and that I should certainly be able to start for the country to-morrow. I continued in bed during the remainder of the day, in order to recover my strength. At night I arose, and descended into the kitchen, in order to warm myself by the fire. I remained there very late, entirely alone, and then went into the garden to repeat a final prayer. As I was returning to my room, I met Mr. Germain, upon the landing of the apartment in which he was sometimes employed. He appeared pale and agitated. Placing a rouleau of gold in my hand, he said to me in a hurried voice, 'Your father will be arrested early to-morrow morning, on a bill of exchange for thirteen hundred francs: he is unable to pay it—here is the money. Hasten to his house before the dawn of day. I have not discovered until to-day, the character of Mr. Ferrand; he is a very wicked man: it is my purpose to unmask him. Do not inform any one that you received this money from me;' and Mr. Germain ran down stairs without giving me an opportunity to express my thanks."

CHAPTER XX.... MADNESS

"This morning," continued Louise, "before any of the household of Mr. Ferrand had arisen, I came here with the money which Mr. Germain had given me, to relieve my father. But the amount was not large enough; and had it not been for your generosity, I could not have delivered him from the hands of the officers. It is probable that after my departure, some one visited my room, and discovered the evidence which has led to this fatal accusation. As a last favor, sir," said Louise, drawing from her pocket the gold, "I beg of you to return this money to Mr. Germain. I had promised to inform no one that he was employed at Mr. Ferrand's, but as you are already aware of it, I cannot accuse myself of indiscretion. I now solemnly repeat to you, in the sight of that God who hears me, that I have not uttered a word but what is strictly true. I have not attempted to palliate my errors, and——"

But interrupting herself, Louise said, in a frightened tone:

"Look at my father, sir! What can be the matter with him?"

Morel had listened to the last part of the narrative with a gloomy indifference, which Rodolphe had attributed to the overwhelming grief of the deeply injured father. "After such repeated and violent shocks," thought Rodolphe, "the fountain of tears must have been so exhausted, his sensibility so blunted, that his apathy is easily explained. He has not even strength enough left,' soliloquized Rodolphe, "to express the burning indignation which he must feel." He was mistaken. As the flame of an expiring candle flutters in the socket, now almost dying into darkness, and again reviving until it is finally extinguished; in the same manner the already shaken intellect of Morel vacillated with a fitful glimmer, sending forth some feeble rays of intelligence, until it suddenly sank into the darkness of idiocy. The conclusion of this terrible narrative had made no impression on the beclouded mind of the lapidary. The wheel which he employed in his daily labor, was placed out of the reach of the artisan. He held neither jewels nor any utensils in his hands: but, by his movements and gestures he seemed to be employed in his ordinary avocation with imaginary tools, and accompanied this pantomime of delirium with a noise of the tongue, to indicate the sound of the wheel in its revolutions.

"I beg of you, sir," said Louise, with increased alarm, "to look at my father!" and approaching the lapidary, she said to him, in a most affectionate and supplicating tone: "Father! father!"

Morel cast upon his daughter the staring, vague, unrecognizing glance peculiar to the deranged; and without relaxing his imaginary employment, he said, in a voice which was gentle and subdued:

"I owe thirteen hundred francs to a notary: 'tis the price of Louise's blood. I must work, toil, sweat, but I will pay it; oh, yes! I will pay it—pay it."

"Good Heaven! sir," exclaimed Louise, "my father has entirely lost his reason! But it cannot last long—it will revive—it will be restored—it is only a momentary absence."

"Morel, my friend, do you not see us? Your daughter is here: she is guiltless of any crime."

"Thirteen hundred francs!" repeated the lapidary, as he continued his pantomime, without casting a look upon Rodolphe.

"My father!" said Louise, throwing herself upon her knees before him, and in spite of his resistance taking his hands in her own; "it is I, your child, your Louise."

"Thirteen hundred francs!" responded the lapidary, releasing himself from his daughter's hands, "thirteen hundred! or else," he added, in a low and confidential tone, "Louise is beheaded;" and he continued his fancied work.

A terrible cry broke from Louise: "My father is deranged!"

she exclaimed, "is deranged! and it is I—yes, I—who am the cause! but God knows that the guilt rests solely with that monster!"

"Be calm, my poor child, and let your courage revive: this derangement of the intellect will be but momentary. Your father has been exposed to so many reiterated blows of late, that his reason has trembled beneath them; but let us hope that it will soon return."

"But my mother, my grandmother, my sisters, my brothers—what will become of them?" exclaimed Louise; "they are now deprived of their only means of support—my father and myself. They must perish from cold and starvation, misery and despair."

"Am I not here? Be calm, my child; they shall need nothing. Take courage: the disclosure which you have made, will be the means of inflicting deserved punishment upon a great criminal. You have convinced me of your innocence, and I doubt not it will be universally sustained and vindicated."

"Ah! sir, that man has been the cause of infamy, disgrace, death; and he has accomplished it all with impunity. Nothing can be done against him—nothing; and that thought consummates my misery."

"Let the thought, that he will meet with deserved vengeance, sustain you."

"What do you mean, sir?"

"I mean, that you should cherish the thought that yourself, your father, and friends will all be avenged."

"Avenged!"

"Yes. I swear to you," said Rodolphe solemnly, "that when his guilt has once been proved, that man shall most severely expiate the infamy, disgrace, and death, of which he has been the cause. If there is not power in the laws to reach him—if his cunning and skill are equal to his turpitude—his cunning will be met by cunning as great, his skill with craft superior to his own, and his crimes by those as deep, but which will be to his own, what a just and retributive punishment inflicted by an inexorable hand is to base and cowardly murder."

"May God hear you, sir! It is not myself that I wish to avenge; it is my insane father—it is my child, who perished at the birth." Then, making a final effort to recall Morel from his delirium, Louise exclaimed, "Farewell, my father, they are dragging me to prison—I shall see you no more. It is your Louise who bids you farewell. My father! my father! my father!"

To this distressing appeal the lapidary made no response; no echo answered from his poor annihilated soul:—the paternal chord, the last to be snapped, had now ceased to vibrate.

The door of the garret opened, and the officer entered.

"The time has expired," said he, addressing Rodolphe, "and I am obliged with regret to announce to you, that it is impossible for me to allow this conversation to continue any longer."

"The conversation is already ended," replied Rodolphe, with indignant grief, pointing to the lapidary; "Louise has nothing more to tell; the father has nothing more to hear—he is insane!"

"Alas! it is what I feared—it is awful," exclaimed the magistrate; and, approaching near the artisan, he was convinced, after a moment's examination, of the sad reality.

"Ah! sir," said he, in a sympathizing tone to Rodolphe, "I was already anxious that the innocence of this young woman should be established; but after such a calamity, my sympathy with her will not exhaust itself in wishes. No, no: I will inform the judges of this most frightful blow, and I doubt not that it will act as an additional motive to sustain, if possible, her innocence."

"Well, well, sir; in acting thus, you will not only fulfil the functions of your office, but a sacred duty attached to it."

"Believe me, sir, that our mission is almost invariably so painful a one, that it affords us happiness and inspires us with gratitude, when the honest and good occasionally enlist our sympathies."

"One word more, sir: the disclosure of Louise Morel has satisfied me of her innocence. Can you inform me in what way the crime of which she is accused was discovered, or rather, denounced?"

"This morning, sir, a housekeeper, in the service of Mr. Ferrand, a notary, deposed to me, that after the sudden disappearance of Louise Morel, whom she knew to have been for seven months *enciente*, she had examined the room of the girl and had discovered indications of a clandestine delivery; a further investigation of tracks in the snow, led to the discovery of a recently born infant interred in the garden. After the deposition of the housekeeper, I visited rue Sentier, and found Mr. Jaques Ferrand very indignant that such a scandalous affair had transpired in his house. The curate of the church of Boune Nouvelle, who had been sent for by Mr. Ferrand, declared that the girl Morel had confessed her fault in his own presence, on a certain day, when she was imploring the compassion and forgiveness of her master; and that, moreover, he had frequently heard Mr. Ferrand give Louise the severest admonitions, predicting that sooner or later she would ruin herself; a prediction, said the Abbé, which has been unhappily realized. The indignation of the notary appeared to me," continued the officer, "so justifiable, that I participated in some degree in his anger; he told me that Louise Morel had probably taken refuge at her father's, and the crime of which she was accused being of an aggravated character, I proceeded immediately to arrest her."

Rodolphe restrained his rage at the duplicity of the notary, and said to the officer, "I give you a thousand thanks for the forbearance you have displayed in this arrest, and for the sympathy which you have promised Louise. I will have a situation provided for this unfortunate man, and also for the mother of his wife, in some Hospital for the Insane." Then addressing Louise, who continued kneeling at her father's feet, and attempting in vain to recall him to his reason, he said, "Submit to your fate, my child; depart without embracing your mother, spare her so distressing a farewell. Give yourself no uneasiness about their support, nothing henceforth shall be wanting for their comfort; a nurse shall be provided for your mother, and your brothers and sisters shall be placed under the charge of our good neighbor, Mademoiselle Rigolette. No pains shall be spared, to restore your father speedily to the use of his senses. Be sustained by courage and confidence, my child; the virtuous are frequently tried by misfortunes; but they always emerge from such struggles, purer, stronger, and more respected."

Two hours after the arrest of Louise, the lapidary and the idiot were, by the orders of Rodolphe, accompanied to Charenton by David, the negro physician; and such arrangements were made as to entitle them to private apartments and the most scrupulous attention. Morel made no resistance, in leaving the house in rue du Temple; he followed, with indifference, those who conducted him; his mania was of a mild, melancholy and inoffensive character. The grandmother was almost famished; meat and bread were shown to her, and she followed those who bore the food with eagerness. The precious stones confided by the lapidary to his wife, were returned upon the same day to Mother Mathieu, the brokeress, who called for them. The woman was followed by Tortillard who had learned the value of the jewels by the conversation which he had overheard at the time of Morel's arrest. The young cripple ascertained that the brokeress resided at No. 11, on the boulevard Saint Denis.

Rigolette informed Madeleine Morel, with great precaution, of the sudden insanity of her husband and of the arrest of Louise. She was at first disconsolate with grief, and gave vent to her emotions by tears and lamentations; but the first paroxysm having passed way, the weak and changeable woman consoled herself in her multiplied afflictions, by the comforts and enjoyments for which she and her children were indebted to the generosity of their benefactor.

The most bitter thoughts passed through Rodolphe's mind, when it recurred to the disclosure which Louise had made. Nothing is more flagrant—thus the reflections of Rodolphe ran—than the almost inevitable ruin to which female domestics are exposed, in consequence of the aid which is furnished to the passions by arbitrary dominion; terror, surprise, and the imperious nature of the relation, are all arrayed against the innocence of the victim. The disparity of rank, the sanctities of the fireside, the struggles, tears, shuddering disgust of the victim, the fearful consequences entailed upon her—shame, disease, remorse, crime—are all forgotten, when the appetite is furnished by such an accessory as the authority of a master. In the case of the crime for which this unfortunate girl was arrested, how strange and unjust the law, thought Rodolphe. In most crimes the accomplice is as much exposed to the penalty as the principal. The receiver of stolen goods is regarded as equally guilty with the thief. Such is the sound principle of legal construction. But when a man abandons a female of whose shame he is the author, and drives her in despair to the perpetration of what may cost her her life—is the sole cause of this crime regarded as an accomplice by the law? No. What is this more than an encouragement to the repetition of his iniquities by the policy of the law. If he is of a bold and adventurous disposition, he can even confront his victim at the bar of the Court; if he is called as a witness, he can urge the authorities to execute the young girl as quick as possible, for the benefit of public morals; he can even inform the tribunal, that he has something important to communicate, and if permission is given him to speak, he can say:

"GENTLEMEN OF THE JURY: It is true, that the miserable woman here arraigned, once rejoiced in virtue and innocence; it is no less true that I am the author of her depravity, and the father of her child: but as my taste was somewhat capricious, I abandoned her, in misery and despair, for another, with whom I was better pleased. She is a blonde, and I had a fancy for a brunette: I had a just and undisputed right thus to act—a right which society acknowledges and guaranties to me."

The jurymen will whisper to each other, that the views of the young man are correct; that no law exists to control his tastes; that he is justified in abandoning a female he has already ruined; that he has a right to exchange a blonde for a brunette.

"Now, gentlemen of the Jury, this miserable woman is accused of infanticide: I confess that I am the father of the child. How does she justify herself? She says that I abandoned her in the depth of misery and want; that her reason was destroyed by her terror and despair, and that it was impossible for her to prosecute her daily labors, and provide a sustenance for herself and child. Now, gentlemen, what unsatisfactory reasons are these? Could she not have sought admission to the Hospital? Would not the Commissioner, upon her confession and oath, have provided for her offspring, in the Asylum for foundlings. In fine, while I was lingering at the café, and indulging my caprices, could she not have found some less barbarous relief for her troubles? Is not her crime frightful? She seems to have been under the conviction, that her duties to society were terminated by the sacrifice of her honor, and the production of her offspring. Such, gentlemen, is but a small part of maternal duties. It was incumbent upon her as a mother, if it proved to be a son, to bring him up, support him, educate him, learn him a trade, and make of him an honest and meritorious man, like his father; or, if a girl, train her in such a manner that she would not ruin herself like her mother: yes, gentlemen, maternity has sacred duties to perform; and the wretch before you, for violating and trampling upon those duties, deserves a most exemplary punishment! For these reasons, gentlemen, hand over this wretched female to the executioner, and show yourselves virtuous, enlightened, and independent citizens. I have finished."

"This gentleman takes a very moral and comprehensive view of the question. some rich hatter, or some usurer, disguised as a foreman, will remark, "he has acted as all of us would have done in his place; for the paleness of the woman impairs her good looks, and he has preferred a brunette to her: there is no law which forbids this. As for the miserable reprobate, she has no one to blame but herself—no one forces it upon her: this crime, which makes society blush and totter to its foundation, was a voluntary act;" and the rich hatter or usurer will be right, perfectly right!

How can the author of all this wo, in the present condition of the law, be accused as an accomplice, direct or indirect! By his own confession, he has been the author of all this wretchedness; and the law regards him as an enviable and fortunate rogue.

Such is one feature of the law, as administered.

Now, for another. Let a poor wretch, in utter ignorance of the law which he cannot read, as much through stupidity as through want, purchase a rag which he knows to have been stolen, and he is sent to the galleys for twenty years. Is it just thus to punish him? Yes, says the law, for the following reason: if there were no receivers there would be no thieves. No, no; show no more compassion to him who encourages crime, than to him who is actually guilty of it. Let the least connivance be visited with a terrible punishment.

Well, in all this there is much sound sense, and wise and exemplary severity; a moral and elevated tone. One could not but respect a society which visits, with condign punishment, the least connivance with crime, if we could forget that the same society, which is so inexorable in inflicting penalties upon crimes against things, is so lenient in crimes against persons; that he, who should maintain that there was either a legal or moral *complicite* between an unfortunate female, and the author of her ruin, would be regarded as a visionary; and if he should dare to assert that, as without receivers there would be no thieves, so without fathers there would be no infanticide, society would exclaim, 'atrocity! madness!' And society would be right, always right: the gentleman who uttered those fine things to the jury, if he was fond of tragic emotions, might witness the execution of the woman of whose crime he is actually an accomplice.

The immunity extended by the laws to the male portion of community for offences like these, shows that the French still sacrifice to the graces, and that they are still the most given to gallantries of any nation in the universe.

CHAPTER XXI. . . . . JACQUES FERRAND.

AT the time of which we are writing, a long wall in a tottering condition, extended along near one of the extremities of the rue du Sentier, covered with a coat of mortar, in which much broken glass was mingled. It inclosed upon one side the garden of Jacques Ferrand, the notary, and terminated at a building of* one story high, surmounted by an attic. Two brass plates, which served the notary for a sign, were seen upon each side of the worm-eaten gate; the original color of which could not be distinguished, under the coating of mud which covered it. The gate opened into a covered passage, on the right of which was a lodge, occupied by an old deaf porter, who bore the same relation to tailors which Mr. Pipelet did to bootmakers. At the left was a stable, which served as a storehouse, washroom, woodhouse, and as the habitation for a colony of rabbits, which were penned up in the manger by the porter, who consoled himself for the recent loss of his wife by rearing these domestic animals. By the side of the lodge was an entrance into a dark, narrow and winding staircase, which led to the office, as clients were informed, by a hand painted black, the forefinger of which pointed to these words upon the wall: "The office is on the second floor." On one side of a large paved yard, in which, between the interstices of the stones grass was growing, could be seen a range of empty sheds; and upon the other, a fence with bars of rusty iron, inclosing the garden, at the lower end of which was seen the pavilion, occupied by the notary alone. A flight of eight or ten steps, shattered, falling, worn, and of a greenish mossy hue, conducted to this square pavilion, devoted to the kitchen and other depending rooms under ground, two stores above, and a garret, where Louise had dwelt. The pavilion also was in a very dilapidated state. Deep cracks furrowed the walls, the windows and blinds, once painted, had been blackened by time; the six windows upon the second floor, were covered by a greasy and opaque rust; but through the more transparent glasses of the first floor, could be discerned cotton curtains of faded yellow, with red fringes. The side of the pavilion which looked into the garden, had originally four windows, two of which were now walled up. The garden seemed to have been abandoned to parasite brambles; no cultivated beds, no shrubbery could be seen; a cluster of elms, five or six large trees, a few locusts, elders, a thin faded grass-plot, overrun with moss and scorched by the sun; alleys of clayish earth, which interrupted the briars, and a subterranean hothouse, were all that rendered the name garden at all appropriate. All prospect was cut off by the tall, gray, and bare walls of the surrounding buildings, occasionally pierced by small loopholes, grated over like the windows of a prison. Such was the gloomy combination which the garden and habitation of the notary presented. Mr. Ferrand attached great importance to this appearance, or rather, to this total absence of all neatness and taste. In the eyes of the vulgar, indifference to personal comfort is regarded, almost invariably, as a proof of disinterested benevolence; and carelessness, as a commendable austerity. The splendid establishments of other notaries, and the almost incredible magnificence of their wives' wardrobes, compared with the gloomy mansion of Mr. Ferrand—despising all luxuries and elegance—inspired clients with respect for his austere character, or rather with a blind confidence in the self-denial of a man, who, from his extensive practice, and the large fortune which he was supposed to possess, might have talked, like many of his brethren, of "my equipages," "my country-seat," "my opera-box," &c.; while on the contrary, he spurned all such expenditures, and practiced the most rigid economy. Hence deposites, loans, legacies, trusts, all fiduciary interest demanding the most unimpeachable integrity, and the most tried fidelity, were abandoned to Mr. Ferrand. The notary consulted his own tastes in his economical mode of living; for he despised society, show, pomp, and all dearly purchased pleasures. But even had his taste been the reverse, he would have freely sacrificed his dearest inclinations for the appearance which he had determined to maintain. We will say a few words upon the character of the man. He belonged to that large family—the misers. The miser is almost invariably represented with laughable or grotesque traits of character, the worst of which is usually selfishness or acerbity. The greater part of the race accumulate their fortune by slow and trifling savings; a very few venture upon loans at an exorbitant interest; the most venturous never dare encounter the whirlpool of stock operations; and it would be regarded as an anomaly, if a miser, for the purpose of augmenting his treasures, should commit a crime, especially murder.

The peculiarity is easily explained. Avarice is essentially a

* The building was what would be usually called in this country, of two stories; the ground floor never being called by the French the first story.

negative or passive passion. The miser, in all his plans and calculations, thinks more of growing rich by daily retrenchment of all that is not absolutely necessary, than of accumulating at the injury or prejudice of others. He is essentially conservative in his character. The miser is weak, timid, cunning, distrustful; he never acts upon the offensive; he is indifferent to the miseries of mankind, contented with the conviction that he is not the author of them; he is, above all, more devoted to what is certain than to what is probable; to the positive, than to the negative; to facts, than to theories. Or, in other words, he is a miser, because he has faith in nothing but the *gold* held in his vaults. Speculations, apparently the most safe, are temptations which the miser easily overcomes; for however secure the adventure may appear, there is always a chance of a loss, and he prefers to lose the interest of his money, than to place the principal in the least jeopardy. A character, therefore, so timid; so opposed to all hazard, is in direct antagonism with the daring energy of the desperado, who risks the galleys, or even his head, for the purpose of appropriating a fortune. Risk is a word which does not exist in the miser's vocabulary. It was for this reason that Jacques Ferrand was a curious specimen of the miser, or perhaps an entirely new variety of the genus; for Jacques Ferrand ran risks, and great risks.

He relied upon his cunning, for it was extremely acute; upon his hypocrisy, which was unfathomable; on his mind, fruitful and versatile; on his audacity, which was infernal; to insure impunity to his already innumerable crimes.

Another trait distinguished the notary from others, who resembled him in some particulars. Other adventurous dispositions, who shrink before no crime for the acquisition of gold, are driven, by the impetuosity of their passions, to gambling, luxurious excesses, gluttony, debauchery; but the worthy Jacques was proof against such temptations: crafty and patient as a forger, cruel and determined as a murderer, he was as sedate and regular as the Harpagon of Moliere. One single passion, or rather appetite, most degraded and beastly, and of ferocious strength, alone had power to goad with frenzy the self-controlled, calculating mind of the man. It was lust—the lust of the beast—the wolf or the tiger. When the savage violence of this impulse raged through the healthy and robust system of the man, a devouring fire seemed to take possession of his brain, obstructing the usual calm operations of his intellect, and reducing the cunning, prudent, and crafty hypocrite, as we have before said, into an ungovernable wolf or tiger; as the history of Louise has proved. The assumed apathy and audacious hypocrisy, with which he denied that crime, was more characteristic of the ordinary temper of the man, than bold and open violence. The instincts of the brute was the sole idea which he attached to the word love. His conduct to Louise abundantly proves, that all kindness, generosity, tenderness, humanity, were absolutely unknown to him. The loan of thirteen hundred francs, at a heavy interest, to Morel, was at the same time a good speculation and a snare. He had perfect confidence in the honesty of the lapidary, and knew that the amount would one day be returned. But the beauty of Louise must have made a great impression upon him, to draw from his coffers a sum for which he might have found a more favorable investment. With the exception of this wickedness, the love of gold was the only passion of Jacques Ferrand. He loved gold, for gold alone; not for the pleasures it afforded, for he was a cynic; not for the enjoyments which it might procure, for he was not imaginative enough to enjoy in anticipation, as some misers do. As to what belonged to himself, he loved it for possession's sake; and he felt, in parting from a deposite which had been confided to his honor and integrity, the same pang, the same torture, the same despair, which Cordillac felt in parting from some ornament which his exquisite taste had made a chef d'œuvre of art. The notary's reputed probity was to him a chef d'œuvre, and a deposite a jewel from which he could not part without the most poignant regrets. What care, cunning, hypocrisy, skill—what *art*, in short—he had displayed, to attract these treasures to his vaults, to feign that sterling integrity, which was rewarded by these proofs of confidence, as precious as the pearls and diamonds in the golden diadems of Cordillac. The celebrated goldsmith, it is said, the more he perfected himself in his art, attached a still higher value to his jewels: considering always his last workmanship as his masterpiece. The more Jacques Ferrand became accomplished in crime, the more tenacious was he of these strong marks of public confidence; considering always the last trick which he played, as his chef d'œuvre. The reader will see, in the sequel of the narrative, by what profound ingenuity and machination he had succeeded in appropriating, with impunity, several very considerable sums. His secluded and mysterious life furnished him with the excitement which the gambler finds in cards or dice. Jacques Ferrand staked, against the fortune of everybody, his own hypocrisy, cunning, audacity; and his play was very successful. What he did not win, was the only loss which he could suffer, except the penalty that human justice might inflict, which he strongly, though vulgarly compared to a chimney, which might, at any moment, fall upon his head. He regarded, also, as so much gain, the boundless esteem and blind confidence with which he not only inspired his wealthy clients, but, also, the middling classes and mechanics in the neighborhood. Great numbers of them deposited funds in his hands, saying: "He is not charitable, that is true; he is a devotee, that is a misfortune: but he is more safe and solvent than the Government or the savings bank."

In spite of his consummate skill, he had committed two of those errors from which the most crafty criminals seldom escape. He had been forced by circumstances to employ two confederates: a great error, he said, which he had partially rectified, for they could not ruin him without ruining themselves; nor could any advantage be gained by denouncing to public justice themselves and the notary. His mind, upon this point, was therefore relieved from fear. Moreover, as he had not yet completed his career of crime, the evils of *complicité* were in some degree compensated, by the assistance which his accomplices afforded him, in carrying out his criminal projects. A few words as to the personal appearance of Mr. Ferrand, and we will immediately introduce the reader into the office of the notary, where he will meet with many of the characters that figure in this narrative.

He was not more than fifty years of age, and even appeared ten years younger; of a moderate stature, with round, broad shoulders, and a form stout and thick-set. He had a reddish complexion, hirsute as a bear. His hair fell flat upon his temples, his forehead was bald, his eyebrows hardly delineated; his billious complexion was covered with freckles, and the frightful mask became a lurid red when he was agitated by any strong emotions. His face was flat as the face of a skeleton; his nose was drove in, and his lips so thin and imperceptible, that his mouth seemed like a slit in his face. His cruel and sinister smile revealed black and decayed teeth. Closely shaved to the temples, the countenance of the man had an austere and sanctimonious, rigid and impassible expression, with eyes that were dark, lively, penetrating, and always in motion, behind large spectacles with green glasses. The sight of Mr. Ferrand was excellent; and, concealed by his spectacles, afforded him the advantage of observing without being observed. He was well aware how much a glance of the eye may involuntarily betray. But in spite of the impassibility of his own countenance, Mr. Ferrand had several times encountered magnetic glances, before which his own quailed; and, in some emergencies, it is dangerous to cast down the eyes in the presence of him who questions, accuses, or judges you. The broad glasses of Mr. Ferrand served him, on such occasions, as a sort of protected rampart, from which he could attentively examine, with perfect impunity, every manœuvre of the enemy; for the whole world were more or less his enemies, because the whole world were his dupes; and because accusers and judges being merely enlightened or awakened dupes. He affected an extreme carelessness in his dress, which amounted to absolute uncleanliness; or rather, he was naturally a sloven. His beard shaved but once in three days, his bald head dirty and scaly, his flat nails always delineated by a black circle, threadbare coat, greasy hat, cravat like a cord, woollen stockings, and a goatish odor emitted from his person, powerfully recommended him to his clients; giving him, in their judgment, the air of one who had a contempt for the world, and imparting to him a perfume of sanctity and practical philosophy which charmed them. "What taste, what passion, or what weakness," said they, "can tempt the notary to sacrifice our interests, or abuse our confidence? He earns sixty thousand francs a year; and yet, his family is composed of a servant and a housekeeper. His solitary pleasure is to go to church on the Sabbath morning and evening: no opera could fascinate him like the grave sound of the organ; no society in the world could compare with that of the curate, by his own fireside, after a frugal dinner. His pleasure was his own probity, his pride his own honor, his happiness—religion."

Such was the opinion which the contemporaries of Jacques Ferrand formed of this rare, great, and exemplary man.

CHAPTER XXII. ..... THE OFFICE.

THERE was no difference between the office of Jacques Ferrand and other offices. His clerks resembled all other clerks.

You reached it through an antechamber, furnished with old chairs. In the office proper, lined with shelves which contained the papers of his clients, five young men bent over black desks, talked, laughed, and scribbled incessantly. There was a waiting room, where the head clerk usually sat, that was filled with pasteboard boxes. An empty apartment intervened, for the purpose of greater privacy, between this and the sanctum of the notary. Such was the entire establishment, where acts of all kinds were perpetrated.

Two o'clock had just struck from an old-fashioned clock, placed between the windows of the office. There was a perceptible agitation among the clerks, which a few fragments of their conversation will explain.

"If any one had affirmed to me that François Germain was a thief, I should have replied, 'You lie!'" said one of the young men.

"And I too."

"And so should I."

"It produced such an effect upon me to see him arrested and carried off by the guard, that I could not eat my breakfast. The daily mess of Madam Seraphin, however, is not much of a loss."

"Seventeen thousand francs is a large sum."

"A famous sum."

"During the fifteen months that Germain has been cashier, there never has been a centime missing from the notary's cash."

"I think the patron was wrong in having him arrested, since the poor fellow swore that he only took thirteen hundred francs in gold."

"And besides, he was returning the thirteen hundred francs to the vault, when the patron sent for the guards."

"That's the trouble of a man's being so austere as the notary: he has no mercy."

"At any rate, one might hesitate a moment before ruining a young man, who has hitherto sustained an excellent character."

"Mr. Ferrand does it for the sake of the example."

"Example! for whom? It is of no use to those who are already honest; and those that are not, know perfectly well that they are liable to exposure if they steal."

"This house is an excellent place for the police, at any rate."

"How so?"

"Why, this morning, Germain and poor Louise have both been arrested."

As far as I am concerned, this affair of Germain does not appear clear to me."

"But he has confessed."

"He confessed that he took thirteen hundred francs, that is true; but he stoutly maintains that he has not touched the fifteen thousand francs in bank bills, and the seven hundred francs which are missing from the vault."

"In fact, since he has confessed one thing, what should prevent him from confessing the other?"

"That is true; one would be punished as much for five hundred francs as for fifteen thousand."

"Yes; but one can keep the fifteen thousand francs, and after leaving prison it would be quite a fortune, as the rogues would say."

"That's not so foolish."

"Whatever may be said, there is something not clear in this affair."

"Germain always took the old man's part, when we called him a Jesuit."

"'Why hasn't the patron a right to go to church!' he would say to us; 'you have a right to go, if you please.'"

"Here comes Chalomel, returning from an errand. He will be greatly surprised."

"What is it—what is it, my good fellows? Is there anything new concerning poor Louise?"

"You would have known it all, you lazy fellow, if you had not been gone so long."

"Do you think that it is only a clerk's step to the rue Chaillot?"

"Oh, you rogue! you rogue!"

"Well, what is the news about the famous Viscount de Saint Remy? Has he not arrived?"

"His carriage was ready, and he sent word by his valet that he was coming immediately; but he was not in very good humor, the valet said. He has a very pretty little mansion; one like those inhabited by the lords of former times, mentioned in Foublas. Oh, Foublas! he is my hero, my model," said Chalomel, depositing his umbrella and removing his overshoes.

"No wonder, then, that the Viscount has judgments and writs out against him."

"The bailiff has sent here an execution for thirty-four thousand francs against him. The creditor prefers, I know not why, to have him come and pay it at this office."

"This exquisite Viscount must be able now to pay his debts; for he returned last evening from the country, where he has been secreted from the officers for three days."

"But why have they not levied upon his house and furniture?"

"He is no fool, I assure you. The house is not his own; the furniture stands in the name of his valet, who professes to hire him a furnished house; the horses and carriages are in the name of the coachman, who says that he supplies the Viscount with a magnificent equipage at so much per month. The Viscount de Saint Remy has his wits about him. But what were you talking about? has anything happened here?"

"Just imagine, that about two hours ago the patron entered the office like a furious man. 'Is Germain here?' said he. 'No, sir.' 'Well, the wretch stole from me last night seventeen thousand francs,' said the notary."

"Germain steal! that cannot be!"

"You will see soon. 'How, sir, are you sure? it is impossible!' we all exclaimed. 'I tell you, gentlemen,' said he, 'that I put yesterday in the drawer of his table, fifteen bills for one thousand francs each, besides two thousand francs in gold, inclosed in a bag. The money has all disappeared.' At this moment father Marriton, the porter, entered, and said, 'The guard is coming, sir.'"

"And Germain?"

"Wait a moment. The notary said to the porter, 'As soon as Mr. Germain comes in, send him up to the office without saying a word to him. I wish to confound him in your presence, gentlemen,' added the notary. After about a quarter of an hour, Germain entered as if nothing had occurred. Mother Seraphin had just brought up our breakfast; he bowed to the notary, and said 'Good morning' to us, very tranquilly. 'Do you not intend to eat your breakfast?' said the patron to Germain. 'No, sir; I thank you,' he replied; 'I have no appetite. 'You come very late.' 'Yes, sir: I had to go to Belleville this morning.' 'Probably to conceal the money you have stolen from me,' exclaimed Mr. Ferrand, in a furious tone."

"And Germain?"

"The poor fellow turned deadly pale, and said in a stammering voice, 'I beg of you, sir, not to ruin me.'"

"Had he stolen?"

"Hold on, I say, Chalomel. 'Do not ruin me,' said Germain to the notary. 'You confess it then, miserable wretch?' 'Yes, sir. But here is the money that is missing. I expected to be able to replace it this morning, before you were up. Unfortunately for me, an individual who had some money of mine, and whom I expected to find last evening, had gone to Belleville for two days; and I had to follow him this morning, which accounts for my being so late. Pardon me, sir: I beg of you not to ruin me. When I took the money, I knew that I should be able to replace it this morning. Here are the thirteen hundred francs in gold.' 'How! thirteen hundred francs!' said the notary. 'It is not a question of the thirteen hundred francs! You have stolen from the drawer of the table where you are employed, fifteen bills of one thousand francs each, from a green pocket-book, and two thousand francs in gold.' 'Never!' said Germain, as if he was overcome with the accusation. 'Never! I have taken thirteen hundred francs in gold, not one sous more. I have seen no pocket-book in the drawer; there were only two thousand francs in gold in a box.' 'The infamous liar!' exclaimed the notary. 'You confess that you have stolen thirteen hundred francs; you must have stolen more; but justice will decide. I will show no mercy to such a flagrant abuse of confidence; I shall make you an example.' In short, my poor Chalomel, the guard arrived about this time with the clerk of police, who issued the writ, and that is the end of it."

"Is it possible? Germain, the very cream of honesty."

"It seemed to all of us most singular."

"It cannot be denied that there are some very strange things in the world. There were some peculiarities about Germain; he never would inform us where he lived."

"Yes: that is true."

"He always had some mystery in his look."

"That is no reason why he should steal seventeen thousand francs."

"Certainly not."

"'Twas a mere remark of mine."

"'Tis a very surprising piece of news—it affects me as if some one had given me a sudden blow on the head. Germain! Germain! who was so honest that he might have been absolved without confession."

"It seemed to me that he was oppressed with some presentiment of misfortune."

"Why so?"

"He has looked for some time as if he had some trouble preying upon his mind."

"Perhaps, 't was concerning Louise."

"Concerning Louise?"

"I only repeat what mother Seraphin said this morning."

"What was that? What was that?"

"That he was Louise's lover, and the father of the child."

"He must have been a sly rogue."

"Can it be so?"

"Bah!"

"It is not true."

"How do you know, Chalomel?"

"Why, not two weeks since, Germain told me that he was in love with an excellent little seamstress, that had a room in the house where he lodged. The tears came into his eyes as he spoke to me of her."

"Fudge! fudge! Chalomel; you must be green."

"He says that Faublas is his hero; and he is not wise enough to comprehend that he might be in love with one, and the lover of the other also."

"I assure you that Germain spoke seriously."

At this moment the principal clerk entered the office. "Have you been on all the errands, Chalomel?" asked he.

"Yes: I have been to the Viscount de Saint Remy—he is coming in a few moments to discharge the claim."

"And have you seen the Countess McGregor?"

"I have, and here is her answer."

"And to the Countess d'Orbigny?"

"She is much obliged to the notary; she arrived yesterday from Normandy; she was not prepared to receive an answer so soon, but here is her letter. I also visited the steward of the Marquis d'Harville; he requested the bill for the contract, in relation to which, I attended at the hotel d'Harville to witness the signature, the other morning."

"You told him that there is no haste?"

"Yes: but the steward insisted upon paying, and here is the money. By the way, I forgot the card which was left below, with the porter; there are a few words upon it. The gentleman called and left it for the notary."

The principal clerk took the card, and read "'Walter Murph, will call at three o'clock, upon important business.' I do not know that name."

"Ah, I have still forgotten one thing; Mr. Badinot said, 'That it was all right; that the notary might do as he pleased, and it would be all right.'"

"Did he not give you a written reply?"

"No, sir: he said he had not time."

"Very well."

"Mr. Charles Robert will call also in the course of the day, to speak to the notary. It seems that he fought a duel yesterday, with the Duke de Lucenay."

"Was he wounded?"

"I presume not, or I should have been informed of it at his house."

"Ah! there is a carriage before the door."

"What fine and spirited horses!"

"And that large English coachman, with a white periwig and livery of brown and silver, and epaulettes like a colonel!"

"It is probably an embassador."

"What a large mustache he has!"

"'T is the carriage of the Viscount de Saint Remy," said Chalomel.

"What! in that style? Excuse me."

Within a moment, the Viscount de Saint Remy entered the office.

CHAPTER XXIII..... THE VISCOUNT DE SAINT REMY.

We have already described the charming face, the exquisite elegance, and the perfect figure of the Viscount de Saint Remy. He had returned the day before from the farm of Arnouville, which was the property of the Duchess de Lucenay, where he had taken refuge against the pursuit of the officers, Malicorne and Bourdin.

The Viscount entered the office abruptly, with his hat upon his head, with a proud and haughty carriage, and partly closing his eyes, asked, with studied impertinence of tone, without looking to any one in particular:

"The notary—where is he?"

"Mr. Ferrand is at present engaged in his private office. If you will wait a moment, he will be able to receive you," said the principal clerk.

"How! wait?"

"But, sir——"

"None of your 'buts!' Go and inform him that the Viscount de Saint Remy is here. I think it very strange that a notary should expect me to wait. How offensive that stove is!"

"Have the kindness to pass into the next room," said the principal clerk; "I will immediately inform Mr. Ferrand of your presence."

The Viscount shrugged his shoulders, and followed the clerk.

After about a quarter of an hour, which seemed to the exquisite Viscount an age, and changed his pique into rage, he was introduced into the private room of the notary. Nothing could be more striking than the contrast between the two men who now confronted each other. They were both profound physiognomists; and in the habit of forming an opinion, at a glance, of the individual with whom they were in intercourse.

The Viscount saw Mr. Jacques Ferrand for the first time, and was impressed with the cold, rigid, impenetrable face of the notary; with his eye concealed by his large green glasses, and his skull half covered by a black silk cap. The notary was seated before his desk, in a leather-lined arm-chair, by the side of a dilapidated fireplace filled with ashes, in which two blackened stumps were smouldering. Curtains of green cotton, almost in rags, fixed to the windows with small iron rods, concealed the lower half, through which a dull and disagreeable light penetrated the cabinet, already sufficiently forbidding. Shelves of black wood filled with labelled boxes, chairs of cherry wood covered with yellow Utrecht velvet, a mahogany clock, a damp and dirty floor, a cracked ceiling, from which spiders' webs hung in festoons, were the principal objects of attraction in the sanctum of Mr. Jacques Ferrand.

The Viscount had not advanced two steps, had not opened his lips, before the notary, who knew his reputation, already hated him, for he saw in him a rival in craft; and, although Mr. Ferrand was himself a personification of ugliness, he did not the less detest elegance, grace, and accomplishments in others; especially, when these advantages were accompanied with supreme insolence of manners. The notary usually affected extreme roughness—almost coarseness—of behavior, toward his clients, who seemed to respect him the more on account of his boorish conduct. He proposed to redouble his brutality toward the Viscount de Saint Remy. Mr. Ferrand was only known to him by reputation, and he expected to behold either a simple or ridiculous scrivener; for his imagination had always portrayed in such a light those men who had the reputation for such peculiar honesty as Mr. Ferrand enjoyed. But the physiognomy which he actually found, inspired the Viscount with fear and hatred, although no serious motive existed for either; and on account of the notary's resolute character. Saint Remy determined to exaggerate his ordinary haughtiness and insolence of manner. The notary retained his cap upon his head, and the Viscount his hat.

"Upon my word, it is very singular," said the latter, in a sharp and cutting voice, "that you should impose upon me the trouble of coming here, instead of sending to my mansion for payment of the drafts which I endorsed to Mr. Badinot, and for which the fellow has sued me. It is insolent for you to expect me to wait for a quarter of an hour in your autechamber."

Mr. Ferrand, in a very cool and collected manner, completed some calculation in which he was engaged, wiped his pen with great care upon a sponge which surrounded a broken china inkstand, and raised toward the Viscount his flat, cold, imperturbable face, fairly burdened with his spectacles; or rather, the head of death, whose eyeless sockets were filled with large green glasses; and after gazing for a moment in silence upon the Viscount, said, in a curt and rough voice:

"Where is the money?"

The sang-froid of the action exasperated the already excited Viscount. Could not he, the idol of women, the envy of men, the paragon of Parisian fashion, the dreaded duellist, produce no more effect upon this contemptible notary! And although there were no spectators of the interview, the pride of the exquisite was shocked. "Where are the drafts?" he asked, in a short and severe tone. The notary knocked with the end of his indurated and hairy finger, upon a large leather pocket-book, and opened not his lips. The Viscount, as if determined not to be outdone in laconic impertinence by the notary, drew from his coat-pocket a small wallet of Russian leather, fastened with clasps of gold, and drawing therefrom forty bills of a thousand francs, showed them to his companion.

"How much?" asked the notary.

"Forty thousand francs."

"Hand them over."

"Here they are, and be quick in your business; pay yourself and surrender the drafts."

The notary took the bills and went with them to the window, turned them over one by one, with an insulting scrupulousness, as if he suspected the genuineness of the Viscount's notes, who turned pale with rage.

Ferrand, as if he had divined the thoughts of his companion, turned partially toward him, and said, with an accent which it is impossible to describe :

"Such things do exist."

The Viscount recovered from a momentary astonishment, and asked in a dry tone:

"As what?"

"As counterfeit bank bills," responded the notary.

"What do you mean, sir, by that remark?"

Jacques Ferrand fastened, for a moment, a penetrating gaze through his green glasses upon the Viscount, and shrugging his shoulders significantly, continued his examination of the notes.

"By Heaven! Mr. Notary, do you know when I ask a question, that I expect to be answered!" exclaimed the Viscount, irritated beyond measure by the cool impertinence of Ferrand.

"*These* are genuine;" said the notary, returning to his desk and taking therefrom a small bundle of stamped papers, to which the bills of exchange were fastened; and placing upon one of the notes for a thousand francs, three roleaux containing three hundred francs with the drafts, said: "There is the change due you from the forty thousand francs; my client charged me to receive from you my bill of costs."

The Viscount, who had with great difficulty restrained his rage during the prolonged scrutiny of the notes by Mr. Ferrand, and the adjustment of the account, exclaimed, without receiving his change, in a voice which trembled with rage :

"I again ask you, sir, what you meant, when you said, '*such things do exist as counterfeit bank notes?*'"

"What I meant?"

"Yes; what you meant!"

"I meant, that I sent for you here upon a matter of forgery:" and the green glasses of the notary were fastened upon the Viscount.

"And pray, what have I to do with forgery!"

After a silence of a moment, Ferrand said to the Viscount, in a severe and admonishing manner :

"Are you aware, sir, of the duties which devolve upon a notary?"

"Their duties appear to me to be very simple; I had forty thousand francs but a moment since, and now I have but thirteen hundred."

"You are very facetious, sir; but I have to inform you, that a notary is, in temporal affairs, what a confessor is in spiritual; his profession often makes him acquainted with secrets of a guilty and disgraceful character."

"Proceed, sir."

"He often finds himself compelled to hold intercourse with swindlers."

"Proceed, sir."

"He ought, as much as in his power, to save an honorable name from degradation."

"What have I to do with this homily?"

"Your father left you, sir, a distinguished name, which you have dishonored."

"Do you dare to speak such insulting language?"

"Had you not been protected by the respect and esteem which his name inspires in the bosom of every honest man, instead of being now called before me, you would find yourself at this moment, in the presence of the judge."

"I do not understand you."

"Two months ago, sir, you discounted by the mediation of a broker, a draft for 53,000 francs, drawn on the firm of Meulaert and Co., Hamburg, by one William Smith, and payable in three months to Mr. Grimaldi, banker of Paris."

"Well, what of that?"

"That draft was a forgery."

"You utter what is not true."

"I repeat, the draft is a forgery; the house of Meulaert and Co. deny any dealings or engagements with William Smith, whose name even is unknown to them."

"Can it be possible!" exclaimed the Viscount de Saint Remy, with great surprise and indignation. "I have been outrageously deceived, for I received the draft as cash."

"From whom?"

"From William Smith, himself: the house of Meulaert and Co. was so well known to me, and I had such confidence in the honor of Mr. Smith, that I received the draft in payment of a sum which he owed me."

There is no such person in existence, as William Smith; he is a creature of your own invention."

"You insult me, sir!"

"His signature is a forgery like the rest."

"I tell you, that such a person as William Smith, does exist; but I have undoubtedly been made the dupe of a misplaced confidence in his integrity."

"Unfortunate young man!"

"Explain yourself, sir," said the Viscount, whose anxiety and rage were both excited by this ironical expression of compassion.

"In short, sir, the actual holder of the draft is convinced that it is a forgery of your own."

"Sir!"

"He alleges that he has proof of the fact; and two days ago, he consulted me upon the propriety of sending for you, and restoring the draft on certain conditions, which was perfectly legal; what follows however, is not so; and I only impart it to you by way of information. He demands, that this very day one hundred thousand francs should be paid to him, or to-morrow the draft will be placed in the hands of the King's Attorney."

"This is infamous."

"And absurd also. I told the holder of the draft, that you were almost ruined by the persecutions which have pursued you for the sum this moment paid to me, and which you must have obtained from some resource unknown to me; but he replied, that 'a certain distinguished lady who might be mentioned, rich enough, would not leave you, unaided, to perish by your embarrassments.'"

"Enough, sir; enough."

"I grant that it is another infamy—another absurdity."

"In short, sir, what does the holder of this draft wish?"

"To take advantage, in an infamous manner, of an infamous act. I consented to make his proposition known to you, on condition that I might be permitted to brand it as an honest man should brand it. Now, this is the gist of the whole matter; if you are guilty, it is for you to choose between the ransom imposed and the criminal court. My proceedings are altogether professional, and I desire no further connection with such a degrading transaction. The present holder of the draft is named Petit Jean. He resides at quay Billy, No. 10, on the banks of the Seine. Arrange the affair with him. You are well adapted to settle together, if you are a forger, as he affirms."

The Vicount de Saint Remy had entered the house of the notary, with a haughty carriage, and unusual arrogance of manner. Although his life had been marked by many degrading and shameful actions, he was still sustained by a certain pride of birth, and hereditary spirit, which had never deserted him. At the commencement of this interview, regarding the notary as an adversary, who only deserved his contempt, he had contented himself with ridiculing his pretensions; but when Jacques Ferrand spoke of forgery, the Vicount felt overwhelmed and crushed, and now felt himself completely overawed by this contemptible notary. Had he not possessed absolute self-command, he never could have restrained the emotion which the terrible and unexpected revelation produced; for such a public exposure would draw after it a train of consequences, more important and endless than even the notary himself suspected.

After a moment's thought and reflection, the haughty, proud, eloquent, vain, and irritable aristocrat, stooped to implore the clemency of the coarse and vulgar man, who had so roughly addressed to him the severe language of indignant probity.

"Sir," said he, in a most cordial tone, "I thank you for the proof of interest which you have afforded me. I regret the language which I recently used to you."

"I take no interest in you, whatever," said Ferrand, harshly. "Your father was an honorable man, and I regret to see his name on the criminal docket; that is all the interest I feel."

"I repeat to you, sir, that I am incapable of the infamy of which I am accused."

"You had better make that observation to Mr. Petit Jean."

"But I admit that the absence of Mr. Smith, who has basely abused my confidence——"

"Infamous Smith!"

"That his absence will expose me to serious inconvenience. I am innocent, and could secure an acquittal, but such an accusation, even, is disgraceful and injurious to an honest man."

"Proceed."

"Be kind and generous enough, sir, to employ the sum which I have just paid you, to indemnify partially the holder of the draft."

"That money is sacred, sir. It belongs to my client."

"Within two or three days I will return it to you."

"You will not be able to do it."

"I have resources."

"None which you dare acknowledge. You assert that your

furniture, and your horses, are no longer your own. A fraudulent pretence in my opinion."

"You are very harsh, sir. But admitting what you assert to be true; shall I not, in an emergency of this kind, dispose of all of my available means? But as it will be absolutely impossible to raise so heavy an amount as 100,000 francs between this hour and to-morrow at noon, I entreat you to employ the money which I have just placed in your hands, to discharge, in part, this unfortunate draft; or else, out of your own immense resources, advance me the money, and release me from a situation of such pain and embarrassment."

"What! I? I trust *you* with 100,000 francs? You must be deranged."

"Sir, I beg of you, in the name of my father, to whom you have just alluded to——"

"I am kind to those who deserve kindness. Appeal to me in behalf of an honest man; I despise sharpers, and I confess it would give me great pleasure, to see some fine gentlemen, fraudulent, lawless, debauched, and impious as yourself, strung to the pillory, as a warning and example to the remainder. But your horses seem to be impatient, Viscount," said the notary, with a satirical smile, that displayed his black teeth.

At this moment, a knock was heard at the door.

"Who is that?"

"The Countess d'Orbigny," said the principal clerk.

"Request her to wait for a moment."

"The stepmother of the Marchioness d'Harville?" inquired Saint Remy.

"Yes, sir; she has business with me. Therefore I must bid you farewell."

"Not a word upon this affair," said the Viscount, in a threatening manner.

"Have I not told you, that a notary was as discreet as a confessor?"

Jacques Ferrand rang the bell, and the clerk made his appearance.

"Ask Madam d'Orbigny to walk in." Then addressing the Viscount, said: "You had better take these thirteen hundred francs. It will assist toward the claim of Mr. Petit Jean."

The Countess d'Orbigny, formerly Madam Roland, entered the moment the Viscount was leaving, with his countenance contracted with rage and mortification for having humbled himself in vain before the notary.

"Good morning, Viscount de Saint Remy," said the Countess. "It is some time since I have had the pleasure of seeing you."

"I have not had the good fortune to meet with the Countess d'Orbigny since the marriage of the Marchioness d'Harville, which I attended as a witness," said the Viscount, smiling, and assuming an amiable and pleased expression of countenance. "Have you resided in Normandy since that time?"

"Yes, indeed. The Count prefers the country, and his tastes are my own: we are perfect provincials, and I have not been in Paris since the marriage of my beloved step-daughter with the excellent Marquis d'Harville. Do you see them often?"

"The Marquis is exceedingly retiring, and rather morose, I fear; I seldom meet him in society," said the Viscount, with a perceptible impatience of tone, because the conversation was actually intolerable at such a crisis in his affairs, and because it seemed to afford infinite amusement to the notary.

The stepmother, delighted with her accidental encounter of a man so elegant and distinguished as the Viscount, was not disposed so quickly to relinquish her prey.

"Is my step-daughter, the Marchioness, as retiring as her husband?"

"The Marchioness is much in the world, and always admired. But I fear that I am encroaching upon your time, and——"

"Not at all, not at all: I assure you, I regard as a good fortune for which I cannot be too thankful, to meet with the paragon of elegant men, the monarch of fashion. I shall be as familiar with Paris in ten minutes as if I had never left it. Pray, how is the Duke de Lucenay, who was co-attestor of the marriage of the Marquis?"

"More eccentric than ever. He started for the East, and returned suddenly, just in time to receive yesterday morning a sword-thrust; which I believe, however, is perfectly harmless."

"Poor Duke! And is his wife as charming and bewitching as ever?"

"You know, Countess, that as I have the honor of being one of her best friends, my testimony upon that subject might be received with some suspicion. Have the kindness, when you return to Aubiers, to remember me kindly to the Count d'Orbigny."

"He will be grateful, I assure you, for your remembrance, for he often inquires about you and your success in the world: he says, that you remind him of the Duke de Lauzan."

"The comparison is very flattering, but unfortunately more kind than true. Farewell, Countess. I hardly dare to hope that you will do me the honor of receiving me before your departure."

"I should be sorry to trouble you with calling upon me: I have merely encamped for a few days in furnished apartments; but if, during the summer or fall, you should happen to pass in our direction to some retreat of fashion, where the most distinguished and beautiful of ladies vie with each other for the honor of receiving you, grant us poor country folk a few days, by way of contrast and retirement from the gay, elegant, and holyday excitement of the life in the châteaux you gladden with your presence."

"Countess——"

"It is unnecessary for me to say how happy the Count d'Orbigny and myself will be to welcome you. But farewell: I believe that this benevolent humorist," and she indicated the notary, "will become fatigued with our conversation."

"Far from it, far from it, I assure you," said the notary, with an accent which rendered it still more difficult for the Viscount to restrain his rage.

"Confess, Viscount, that Mr. Ferrand is a terrible man. You will not escape many a scolding, if you have been so fortunate as to intrust him with your affairs: he has no mercy, I assure you. But what do I say? For a man with such a reputation for elegance as yourself, to select Mr. Ferrand for a notary, is proof of reform. He dismisses instantly any client who is guilty of extravagance: he will not condescend to be notary for everybody." Then addressing Mr. Ferrand, she said: "Are you aware of the illustrious convert you have made, Mr. Puritan? the paragon of elegance—the monarch of the fashionable world."

"It is a conversion, Countess, I assure you; for the Viscount leaves my office a very different man from what he entered it."

"It is not surprising that you perform a miracle, for you are a saint."

"You flatter me, Countess."

The Viscount de Saint Remy made a low bow to the Countess d'Orbigny; and wishing to make a final effort with the notary, said, with an air the assumed coolness of which could not conceal his anxiety: "You refuse decidedly, my dear Mr. Ferrand, to grant me the favor which I solicit?"

"It is some folly, I doubt not," said the Countess, laughing; "be unyielding, my dear puritan."

"You hear the advice: I shall not dare refuse to follow the counsel of such a beautiful lady."

"My dear Mr. Ferrand, let us speak seriously of serious things; and you know how important this is to me. Do you decidedly refuse?" asked the Viscount, with an anxiety which was difficult to hide.

The notary had the refined cruelty to hesitate for a moment: the Viscount began to hope.

"How, man of iron, do you yield?" said the Countess, laughing again; "are you also fascinated by the irresistible?"

"Upon my word, Countess, I was about yielding, as you say; but you make me blush for my weakness," replied the notary. Then addressing the Viscount, he said to him, with an emphasis that there was no mistaking: "Seriously, it is impossible. I will not suffer you, through the caprice of a moment, to commit so foolish an act. I consider myself as the guardian of my clients, as I have no other family; and I should regard myself as an accomplice of any follies which I allowed them to commit."

"The puritan! hear the puritan!" exclaimed the Countess.

"Moreover, I counsel you to see Mr. Petit Jean; he will think, I am sure, precisely like myself, and will answer you no."

The Viscount departed in a most desperate mood. After a moment's hesitation, he said to himself, "it must be so;" and he instructed the lacquey who held open the door, to drive to the Hotel de Lucenay.

While he is on his way to the Duchess, we will admit the reader to the interview between Mr. Ferrand and the stepmother of the Marchioness d'Harville.

CHAPTER XXIV. ... THE TESTAMENT.

As the reader may have forgotten the description which the Marchioness gave of the Countess d'Orbigny, we will repeat that she was a small woman, with pale light hair, and eyelashes almost white, with eyes perfectly round and of a pale blue. Her speech was honeyed in its tone, her look hypocritical, her manners insidious and insinuating, and an expression of art and cruelty could be detected on a close scrutiny of her perfidious countenance.

"What a charming young man is the Viscount de Saint Remy!" said the Countess.

"Charming," said the notary; "but let us speak of business. You wrote to me from Normandy, that you wished to consult me upon some important affair."

"Have you not been my constant counsellor, since the good Doctor Polidori made us acquainted? By the way, have you heard from him recently?" said the Countess, with apparent unconcern of manner.

"He has not written to me once since he left Paris," replied the notary, with no less indifference.

We must inform the reader that the two individuals now engaged in conversation, lied to each other, in the most unscrupulous manner. The notary had recently seen Polidori, who was in fact one of the two accomplices to which we have alluded. He was identical with the Doctor Vincent who had proposed to him to send Louise Morel to the Martials, where he might poison her with impunity.

The stepmother of the Marchioness d'Harville had now visited Paris, for the purpose of having a private conference with the same infamous scoundrel, who had for some time concealed himself under the assumed name of Cesar Bradamanti.

"But never mind about the good doctor," continued the Countess; "I am in great anxiety; my husband is unwell, and his constitution is gradually breaking. Without inspiring me with any immediate alarm, his situation torments me, or rather torments him," said Madam d'Orbigny, wiping a slight moisture from her eyes.

"What is the matter?"

"He speaks continually of a final arrangement of his affairs, of his will;" and the afflicted woman concealed, for a few moments, her face in her handkerchief.

"It is a mournful subject to contemplate, but there should be nothing distressing to you in this precaution. What are the Count d'Orbigny's intentions respecting his property?"

"Great Heaven! how do I know? You may imagine when he mentions the subject to me, I do not suffer his mind to dwell long upon it."

"But has he not given you any positive information upon the subject?"

"I believe," said the Countess, with a disinterested tone, "I believe he intends to give me not only all that the law allows him to devise, but also—but I beg of you let us not speak of it."

"What, then, do you propose to speak about?"

"You are right, cruel man; I must bring my mind to the contemplation of the unpleasant subject which has drawn me here. I believe, then, that the Count d'Orbigny wishes to change the character of a part of his fortune, in such a manner as to be able to give me a considerable sum."

"But his daughter! his daughter!" exclaimed the notary, with severity of tone. "I must inform you, that more than a year since, the Marquis d'Harville placed his affairs in my hands; I have recently advised him to purchase a magnificent estate. You are aware, madam, of my strictness in all my business relations; it is of but trifling importance that the Marquis d'Harville is my client; what I plead for, is the cause of justice. If your husband intends to act toward his daughter in a manner repugnant to those principles which have actuated my whole life, I must tell you plainly, that you cannot rely upon my assistance. My conduct has always been straight-forward and upright."

"And mine, also: and I constantly repeat to my husband what you have just told me. 'Your daughter,' I say, 'has been guilty of very unfilial conduct toward you, but that is no reason why you should disinherit her.'"

"That was good counsel; and what did he reply?"

"He replied, 'I will leave to my daughter an income of 25,000 francs; she received more than a million from her mother; her husband already possesses an enormous fortune; why cannot I devise the remainder to you, my tenderest friend! the sole support and consolation of my declining years; my guardian! my angel!' I only repeat to you these unmerited compliments," said the Countess, with a modest sigh, "to show you the kind feelings of the Count d'Orbigny toward me; but I have always discouraged his bountiful intentions, and he finally requested me to take your advice."

"But I am not acquainted with the Count d'Orbigny."

"He is aware, like all the rest of the world, of your reputation for integrity and honor."

"But why did he direct you to me, in particular?"

"In order to obviate my scruples and hesitation; 'I do not advise you,' he said, 'to resort to my own notary, because you might think him partial to me; but I will rely entirely upon the decision of that man, whose unshaken probity is proverbial—Mr. Jacques Ferrand. Should he think that your delicacy of character would be compromised by accepting of my offers, I will not press them upon you any more; but if his opinion coincides with mine, you must yield your scruples.' I consented to his proposal, and in this manner you have become our arbiter. 'If he approves of my intentions, I will forward him,' said my husband, 'a power of attorney to convert into money my real estate and bank stock, which I will allow him to hold on deposite, so that after my decease, a reputable support, at least, will be secured to you, my tenderest friend.'"

Never had the spectacles of Mr. Ferrand been of greater service to him, for without their intervention, the Countess d'Orbigny would have noticed the manner in which his eyes kindled with a sudden joy, at the mention of the word deposite. He replied, however, in a tone, the moroseness of which was not much softened down:

"It is enough to destroy entirely all my patience. This is the third case which has been referred to me as arbiter, always under the pretext of my probity; the only word which people seem to have in their mouths. My probity! my probity! all the advantage which it yields me, is troubles and perplexities."

"Do not be rude with me, I beg of you, my good Mr. Ferrand. You will, I am persuaded, be prevailed upon to write to the Count d'Orbigny, who only waits for your opinion, in order to forward the power of attorney, to change the investment."

"And to how much does the property amount?"

"He spake, I think, of 4 or 500,000 francs."

"The sum is smaller than I supposed. It certainly is entitled to grave consideration, that you, for a number of years have devoted yourself entirely to the Count d'Orbigny, and also the fact, that his daughter is rich, very rich, and that you are without any fortune. I think that I can conscientiously approve of his intentions, and advise you that no scruples should prevent you from accepting his offers."

"Do you really so advise me, Mr. Ferrand?" said the Countess d'Orbigny, who, like every one else, was a dupe of the hypocritical pretensions of the notary, and whose mind had never been enlightened by her confidential friend, the Doctor Polidori.

"I advise you to accept."

"I shall then be obliged to conquer my hesitation," said the Countess with a sigh.

The principal clerk now knocked at the door.

"Who is it?"

"The Countess McGregor."

"Inform her that I will receive her in a moment."

"I will then leave you, my dear Mr. Ferrand. You must write to my husband, since such is his wish; and to-morrow he will send you the power of attorney."

"I will write."

"Adieu, my worthy and excellent counsellor."

"The people of the world have no idea how disagreeable it is to be intrusted with such deposites. The responsibility that always attends the fiduciary relation, is overwhelming. I tell you that there is nothing so troublesome as this fine reputation for probity which I enjoy, which crowds upon my shoulders the most troublesome business of other people."

"And excites the admiration of the world," said the Countess.

"The Lord be praised! I aspire to higher rewards than those of earth," said Mr. Ferrand, in a most sanctimonious manner.

The Countess d'Orbigny was succeeded by the Countess Sarah McGregor.

CHAPTER XXV. ..... THE COUNTESS SARAH M'GREGOR.

Sarah entered the office of the notary with her characteristic composure. Jacques Ferrand was entirely unacquainted with her, and of course ignorant of the purport of her present visit. With the hope, therefore, of securing a new dupe, he was unusually guarded and reserved. He fastened an attentive and penetrating gaze upon the Countess, and succeeded in detecting, even in the impenetrable and marble visage of the adventuress, a slight motion of the eyebrows which betrayed embarrassment.

The notary arose from his seat, pointed to a chair, and said to the Countess: "You requested an interview for to-day. I was very much engaged yesterday, and I found no time until this morning, to send you a reply. I hope you will excuse me."

"I was anxious to see you, sir, upon business of the greatest importance. Your reputation for honesty, goodness, and your obliging disposition, have inspired me with the hope that I shall be successful, in the application which I have to make."

The notary slightly bowed.

"I am aware, sir, that your discretion is above all suspicion."

"It is a part of my duty, madam."

"You are, sir, a man inflexible and incorruptible."

"Yes, madam."

"And yet, sir, if you were informed that it is in your power to restore life, or what is worth more than life, reason, to a most afflicted mother, could you find it in your heart to refuse?"

"Explain yourself more particularly, madam, and I will reply."

"About fourteen years since, at the close of the month of December, 1824, a young man, clad in mourning apparel, applied to you to receive as a life annuity, the sum of one hundred and fifty thousand francs, settled upon a child, at that period three years old, whose parents wished to remain unknown."

"Proceed, madam."

"After the expiration of two years," continued Sarah, unable totally to overcome a slight emotion, "on the 28th of November, 1827, the child died."

"Before proceeding further, madam, I wish to know what interest you have in this transaction."

"The mother of the little girl is my sister, sir;* and I have her own testimony as to what I have advanced, as well as the certificate of the child's death, the letters of the person who took care of her, and the receipt of one of your clients, in whose hands you placed the one hundred and fifty thousand francs."

"Let me see the papers, madam."

Quite astonished, at not being credited upon her assertion, Sarah drew from a pocket-book several papers, which the notary examined with great care."

"Well, madam, what do you desire? The certificate of death is perfectly formal. The one hundred and fifty thousand francs have reverted to my client, Mr. Petit Jean, by the decease of this child. It is one of the chances of men who take an annuity, as I observed to the person who intrusted me with the affair. As for the income, I paid it punctually, until the death of the child."

"I take pleasure in acknowledging, sir, that nothing could be more faithful and upright than your proceedings. I believe, also, that the woman to whom the child was confided, is entitled to our gratitude; for she took excellent care of my poor little niece."

"That is very true, madam. I was so well pleased with the manner in which that woman discharged her duties, that, finding her without a situation, I took her into my service, and have ever since employed her."

"Is Madam Seraphin in your service, sir?"

"She has been my housekeeper for fourteen years; and I have nothing but praise to lavish upon her."

"Since that is the case, she would be of great assistance, if you would consent to grant the request which I am about to make. I am conscious that it will appear somewhat singular to you: it may be, at the first glance, culpable; but when you are aware of all the facts, and take into consideration the intention——"

"A culpable request, madam, I must consider you as incapable of making, as myself of granting."

"I am aware, sir, that you are the last person in the world to whom such a request should be made. But I place my hope, my only hope, upon your compassion. At all events, I may rely upon your discretion?"

"Most assuredly, madam."

"I will, therefore, proceed. The death of that poor little girl threw her mother into such inconsolable affliction, that, although fourteen years have elapsed, her grief is as disconsolate now as when the mournful event first occurred; and after having been in a constant state of alarm for her life, we now fear for her reason."

"Unfortunate mother!" said Mr. Ferrand, with a sigh.

"Oh! yes; very unfortunate, sir! for she was compelled to blush for her daughter during her entire life; whereas, if she was now living, she would be able to recognize her legitimacy, to take all the pride and affection of a mother in her offspring; so that her incessant regrets, mingled with her other sorrows, will, we fear, deprive her of the use of her reason."

"It is unfortunate, that nothing can be done for her."

"But there can be something done, sir."

"How, madam?"

"Suppose the mother should be told, 'The child whom you believed dead is alive; the woman who maintained her in childhood can affirm it.'"

"Such a falsehood would be cruel, madam. 'Twould only inspire the mother with hopes that would soon be disappointed."

"But if it were not a falsehood—or rather, if she could be convinced that the child actually lives?"

"It could only be accomplished by a miracle. If to join my prayers with yours, was all that is necessary, madam, I would most cheerfully do so, from the bottom of my heart; but, unfortunately, the certificate of the child's death is formal."

"Indeed, sir, I know well that the child is dead; but if you would only render me your assistance, the evil would not be irreparable."

"You speak in riddles, madam."

"I will speak more clearly. Should my sister find to-morrow this daughter, not only her death would be averted, but she would marry the father of this child, who like herself has continued single until this day. My niece died at the age of six; as she was separated at such a very early age from her parents, they cannot be supposed to retain any very vivid impression of her looks. Suppose a young girl of seventeen could be found; for my niece, had she lived, would have now reached that age; such a girl can be easily discovered, for many are abandoned by their parents. My sister would then be told, 'Here is your daughter. Important interests have demanded that it should be represented to you, that she was dead. The woman who brought her up, and a respectable notary, both affirm that such is the fact, and will prove to you the identity of the child.'"

Jacques Ferrand, after allowing the Countess to proceed, without interruption, exclaimed: "Enough! enough! madam. I consider the proposition as infamous."

"Sir!"

"I am surprised, madam, that you dare to propose to me, the substitution of a child; the annihilation of a certificate of death; in fine, a criminal action. It is the first time in my life, that I have been compelled to endure such an outrage; and Thou, my God, knowest that I have not deserved it."

"But, sir, who can be injured by such a harmless deceit? The persons whom this stratagem will bring together, are both unmarried and without other children—both are filled with the most poignant regret for the child they have lost. To deceive them, is to restore one to life, and both to happiness, and to insure a fortunate life to some poor abandoned girl; it is therefore a noble and generous action, and not a crime."

"I am surprised how a disordered perception, can give a virtuous coloring to the most execrable actions."

"But, sir, reflect."

"I repeat, madam, it is infamous; it is a shame for a lady of your rank, to contrive such an iniquitous stratagem. I hope, in charity, that your sister is a stranger to it."

"Sir!"

"Enough! enough! madam. I am not a coxcomb, and dare, in my rough way, to tell you some harsh truths."

Sarah threw upon the notary one of her dark, profound, severe glances, and said to him, in a cool tone:

"You refuse, then?"

"No new insults, madam."

"Take care!"

"What! threats?"

"Yes, threats! and to prove to you that they are not vain, learn first that I have no sister."

"How, madam?"

"I am the mother of that child."

"You?"

"*I*. I have invented a fable, with the hope of exciting your compassion. I have discovered that you are without it, and since you wish for war, I have raised the mask for war."

"War: because I refuse to become your confederate in a criminal act? what audacity!"

"Hear me, sir; your reputation for honesty is firmly established, widely disseminated, and notorious."

"Because, madam, it is deserved; and you must have lost your reason, to presume to assail it with such a temptation."

"I know, sir, better than any one else, with what mistrust and auspicion we should regard reputations for inflexible virtue, so often used to veil the infidelity of females and the knavery of men."

"Do you dare allege, madam ——"

"From the commencement of our conversation, I have doubted your title to the consideration and esteem which you enjoy."

"Indeed, madam, that doubt does honor to your penetration."

"Does it not? for it is not founded upon trifles, but on certain instincts, certain inexplicable resentments, certain presentiments, in which I have never yet been deceived."

"Let us conclude the conversation, madam."

"I will declare to you my resolution. I believe that my poor daughter is dead, but that is of no consequence. I intend most positively to asseverate that she is not dead; the most trifling circumstances may sustain the assertion; the worst causes are often pleaded. You are now in a position, which must excite

* We think it useless to remind the reader, that the little girl alluded to, was Fleur de Marie, the daughter of Rodolphe and Sarah; and that the Countess, in speaking of a pretended sister, lied, for the purpose of furthering her projects, as will be seen. Sarah was under the impression, as well as Rodolphe, that their daughter was dead.

much envy; there are many who will rejoice at an opportunity for attacking you. I will give it to them."

"You!"

"Yes, I!—upon some absurd pretext, say some informality in the certificate of death, or anything else; I will attack you. I will maintain in the face of every denial, that she is not dead. I have the greatest interest to make it appear that she lives, and although lost, the suit will give great notoriety to the affair; a mother who claims her child excites universal sympathy. I shall enlist upon my side, all those who envy, all those who are hostile to you, and all enthusiastic and chivalrous souls."

"The plan is as foolish as 't is wicked. What interest could I have in pretending that your child was dead?"

"'T is true, the motive may be a perplexing one to discover, but fortunately, there are lawyers equal to any emergency; and a very plausible motive occurs to me—desirous of dividing with your client the sum which depended upon the child's life, you have contrived her disappearance."

The impassible notary shrugged his shoulders.

"Had I been criminal enough to engage in any such project, I should have murdered her at once."

Sarah shuddered involuntarily. After a moment's silence, however, she continued with bitterness: "For such a holy, sanctimonious man, that is a thought of crime drawn from a deep abyss. Have I in shooting at random, hit the mark? It certainly has excited my suspicion, and I will fathom it. One word more. I have probably convinced you with what kind of a woman you have to deal. I crush without mercy, all who are obstacles in my path. Reflect upon what I have said, for by to-morrow, it must be decided. You are able to perform with perfect impunity, all that I have demanded. In his happiness in having her restored, the father of my child will never be scrupulous on the question of identity, if the deceit, which will afford him such happiness, is only artfully contrived. He has, besides, no other proof of the death of the child, than what was furnished by the letter I wrote him fourteen years ago; and it will be easy for me to persuade him that I deceived him upon that point—for at that time, I had just cause of complaint against him, and I can say, that in my sorrow and rage, I wished to snap the last tie which bound us together. You cannot, therefore be in the least compromised by consenting to my request. Affirm, only affirm, irreproachable man, that every thing was concerted between you and Madam Seraphin, and you will obtain implicit credence. As for the one hundred and fifty thousand francs settled upon my daughter, that concerns me alone;—the sum can remain in the hands of your client, who has taken possession of it, and who need not be wiser on account of this device; and finally, you will be at liberty to name your own reward."

Jacques Ferrand retained all his composure, notwithstanding the dangerous and alarming situation in which the determination of the Countess placed him. The mother, believing in the decease of her daughter, had presented to him the startling propoposal, to pretend that a child was living, whom, for fourteen years, he had been pretending was dead. He was too skillful not to perceive—he was too susceptible not to fear, the threats of the Countess. Although the superstructure was skillfully and laboriously raised, the foundation of the notary's reputation rested upon sand. The public are as susceptible of suspicion as they are of deception; and they will trample in the dust to-morrow, the same man they exalted to the skies to-day. Who could foresee the consequences of the formidable attack upon the unstable edifice of his reputed probity. However rash the assault, the vigor with which it was pursued, could not but awaken suspicions. The penetration of the Countess had already alarmed the notary's fears. The unscrupulous mother had not evinced the least affliction for her daughter's death. She seemed merely to look upon it, as an event which disconcerted some ultimate project; and dispositions, of such a character, were without mercy or remorse in the prosecution of their purposes of interest or revenge. With the intention of gaining time, to parry such a formidable onslaught, he said to Sarah: "You allowed me, madam, till to-morrow at noon, to deliberate upon your proposition; but I give you until day after to-morrow to relinquish a project, the grave nature of which you do not seem fully to comprehend. If, by that time, you do not give me information by letter, that you have abandoned your rash and criminal undertaking, you will discover to your sorrow, that justice has the means of protecting honest men, who refuse to act as confederates in an illegal scheme; and that it can strike a blow at the authors of iniquitous machinations."

"I understand you, sir; you wish, one day more to reflect upon my proposal. I welcome it as an auspicious sign, and will grant the delay which you seem to desire. Day after to-morrow, at this hour, I will return; and the question will then be determined, whether there is to be peace or war between us. I repeat it: exterminating war without mercy, without remorse." The Countess left.

"All goes well," soliloquized the resolute woman. "The young girl in whom, through some strange caprice, Rodolphe had interested himself, and placed on the farm of Bouqueval, that he might one day take her to his bosom, is, thanks to the one-eyed woman, no longer to be feared. The address of the Grand Duke has delivered the Marchioness from the snares which I had prepared; but she cannot escape the new one which I have formed, and she will be separated from Rodolphe for ever. When he is reduced to such a despairing condition; separated from every object that could enlist either his sympathy or affection; will he not become an easy dupe to the tale, to which I can give every appearance of reality by the aid of the notary? And I am convinced that he will assist me, for I have thoroughly frightened him. I can easily find an orphan girl, interesting, poor, and friendless; who, under my instructions, can readily act the part of the daughter, so deeply regretted by Rodolphe. I know the magnanimity of his nature, the generosity of his spirit. I have no doubt, that to give an honorable name, and the rank of her birth, to a daughter who, until that moment, has been an outcast from the affection and consideration to which she is entitled; he will renew those bonds, which I once deemed indissoluble. The predictions of my nurse will be fulfilled, and I shall grasp that crown, which seems ever to have been dancing before me."

The Countess McGregor had scarcely left the house of the notary, when Mr. Charles Robert entered it; having descended from a very elegant cabriolet, he went at once, as if he was perfectly acquainted with the locality, to the office of Mr. Jacques Ferrand.

CHAPTER XXVI..... MR. CHARLES ROBERT.

THE Commander, as he was called by Madam Pipelet, entered without ceremony, the sanctum of the notary, whom he found in a very surly and unamiable state of mind; and who said to him in a savage tone, "My afternoons are reserved for my clients; when you wish to speak to me, I desire you would come in the morning."

"My dear scrivener," (this soubriquet was one of Mr. Robert's pleasantries,) "I have called upon a matter of weighty importance. In the first place, and in the second, I wished to assure you of my bodily safety, and relieve any fears which might have disturbed you, on my account."

"What fears?"

"Do you not know?"

"What?"

"My duel."

"Your duel!"

"With the Duke de Lucenay. Can it be possible that you have not heard of it?"

"No."

"Bah!"

"What was the duel about?"

"An insult of such a serious character as to require blood to wash it away. Just conceive, that at the ball of the embassador of * * *, the Duke de Lucenay had the boldness to assert in my very face that I had phlegm."

"That you *had!*"

"Phlegm, phlegm, my dear scrivener—a disorder which must be extremely ridiculous."

"And you fought on account of that?"

"What should one fight for? Do you think that I can, with cool blood, hear a man accuse me of having phlegm, in the presence of a charming woman; the little Marchioness, who —in fine—— But never mind; I could not suffer it to pass without bloodshed."

"Indeed!"

"We military men, you know, must always be prepared. My seconds waited upon the Duke the day before yesterday, and arranged the preliminary. I instructed them to demand, in plain terms, either a duel or a retraction."

"Retraction of what?"

"Of the phlegm, to be sure, which he allowed himself to attribute to me."

The notary shrugged his shoulders.

"The seconds of the Duke said, 'We are ready to do justice to the honorable character of Mr. Charles Robert; but the Duke de Lucenay cannot, ought not, and will not, withdraw the offensive expression.' 'Well, then, gentlemen,' my seconds replied, 'we understand that the Duke de Lucenay insists upon affirming, that Mr. Charles Robert has the phlegm?' 'Yes. In so

doing, he did not intend to injure the reputation of Mr. Charles Robert.' 'Then he must retract.' 'No, gentlemen: the Duke de Lucenay admits that Mr. Charles Robert is a brave man, but still affirms that he has the phlegm; so you see that there is no way of arranging the affair amicably.'"

"Certainly not," said the notary: "you were insulted in what an honorable man esteems his most respectable part."

"Was I not? Therefore the preliminaries were arranged; the day, hour, and place of meeting agreed upon; and yesterday morning, at Vincennes, the duel came off in the most formal and approved manner. I slightly wounded the Duke in the arm, with my sword. The seconds interfered, and declared the honor of the parties satisfied. The Duke then said, in a loud voice, 'I never retract an offensive expression before a duel, but after it, I have no scruples of that kind. It is, therefore, my duty and privilege to proclaim, that I have unjustly accused Mr. Charles Robert of having phlegm. Gentlemen, I acknowledge not only that my worthy antagonist has not phlegm, but I affirm also, that I believe him entirely incapable of having it.' The Duke then cordially extended his hand to me, and said, 'Are you satisfied?' 'We are friends for life,' I replied. I could not say less, for the Duke behaved like a perfect gentleman. He might have refused any explanation; he might have merely said that I had no phlegm; but to affirm that I was incapable of ever having it, was a very delicate compliment."

"This is what I call courage nobly employed," said the notary. "But what do you want?"

"My dear notekeeper,"—another pleasantry of Mr. Roberts—"I have called upon a matter of great importance to me. You know that it was agreed between us, when I advanced three hundred and fifty thousand francs for the purchase of your commission, that by giving you three months' notice, I could withdraw the capital upon which I receive from you the interest."

"Proceed."

"Well, then," said Mr. Robert, with some slight embarrassment, "I—no—but—it is that——"

"What?"

"A mere caprice: I have an idea of becoming a landlord, my dear scrivener."

"Explain yourself—I am impatient."

"In one word, an estate has been offered to me; and, if it is not disagreeable to you, I wish, that is to say, I desire, to withdraw my investment from your hands, according to our stipulation."

"Indeed!"

"I hope it gives you no offence."

"Why should I be offended?"

"Because you might believe——"

"Might believe what?"

"I am only the echo of reports."

"What reports?"

"Oh, nothing—mere trifles."

"But speak."

"Believe me; I do not withdraw my money because there are some reports in circulation respecting you."

"What reports, I ask!"

"There can be no truth in them; but some malicious people affirm that you have been drawn into some suspicious affair—mere rumors of course—much like the accusation of our having speculated in stocks together. The report soon fell to the ground, for I will be hanged if——"

"You do not believe your money safe in my hands? Wait a moment for me."

Mr. Ferrand locked the drawer of his desk, and arose.

"Where are you going, my excellent notekeeper?"

"I am going to find something to convince you of the truth of the reports in circulation, respecting my responsibility," said the notary, with irony; and opening the door of a private staircase, which gave him an access to the pavilion without passing through the office, Mr. Ferrand disappeared.

He had hardly gone, when the principal clerk knocked at the door.

"Come in," said Mr. Robert.

"Is not Mr. Ferrand here?"

"No, my worthy bazochian;" (another pleasantry of Mr. Robert.)

"A lady, concealed by a veil, wishes to speak with the notary immediately, upon urgent business."

"The notary will soon return. I will tell him that the lady—by the way, is she pretty?"

"It would be difficult to say; she wears a black veil, which is so thick that her face cannot be seen."

"Well, well; I will find out who she is when I leave; and I will inform Mr. Ferrand of her presence, the moment he comes in."

The principal clerk now left the room.

"Where the devil can the scrivener have gone?" said Mr. Robert, musingly. "He is probably looking into the state of his cash account. If the reports in circulation are absurd, so much the better. I presume it is all malice. Honest people, like Jacques Ferrand, are always envied. At all events, I prefer to have my money in my own hands, and I can buy the chateau. It has Gothic towers of the age of Louis XIV. It will give me an aristocratic appearance, and won't be slow; it will not be like my love for that affected prude, the Marchioness d'Harville. Did she not make me go to the expense —— no, no; I did not get the worth of my money there; as the old portière with her everlasting periwig said, 'that flare-up cost me three thousand francs:' to be sure, I 've got the furniture, and I have also the Marchioness in my power—but here comes the scrivener."

Mr. Ferrand entered, holding in his hands some papers, which he gave to Mr. Robert. "Here," said he, "are three hundred and fifty thousand francs in treasury notes. Within a few days we will arrange the interest. Give me a receipt."

"How!" exclaimed Mr. Robert, stupified. "How! I hope you do not believe——"

"I believe nothing."

"But——"

"The receipt—the receipt."

"My dear notekeeper!"

"Write the receipt if you please; and inform all people who doubt my solvency, in what manner I meet suspicion."

"The moment this becomes known, your credit will be firmer than ever. But I ask you, seriously, to take back the money. I did not wish it at present. I told you I should need it in three months."

"Mr. Charles Robert, I never suffer myself to be suspected twice."

"Are you offended?"

"The receipt—the receipt."

"You are a perfect iron bar," said Mr. Robert, and added, while he was writing the receipt: "There is a lady, closely veiled, who wishes to speak to you immediately, on very urgent business. I shall have great sport in looking at her when I pass out. Here is your receipt. Is it correct?"

"Yes. Now depart through the small staircase."

"But the lady?"

"I direct you to depart that way, because I wish to prevent you from seeing her."

And the notary rang for his clerk, and said to him: "Ask the lady to come in. Good afternoon, Mr. Robert."

"I suppose I must give up seeing her. I hope you cherish no grudge, my dear scrivener. Believe that——"

"Yes, yes; farewell." And the notary closed the door upon Mr. Charles Robert.

After a few moments, the principal clerk ushered in the Duchess de Lucenay, dressed very plainly, enveloped in a large shawl, and having her face concealed by a veil of the thickest black lace, falling from a bonnet of the same color.

CHAPTER XXVII. ..... THE DUCHESS DE LUCENAY.

SOMEWHAT agitated, the Duchess de Lucenay approached the desk of the notary, who advanced a few steps to receive her.

"Who are you, madam, and what do you wish of me?" said Jacques Ferrand, in a rude manner. The notary was very far from an amiable mood of mind, for his temper, already soured by the threats of the Countess, had been rendered entirely ungovernable by the suspicions of Mr. Charles Robert; and as the Duchess was dressed in a very unostentatious manner, he saw no reason why he should be particularly polished in his address. As she hesitated to reply to his question, Mr. Ferrand asked, in a still harsher tone:

"Will you explain yourself, madam?"

"Sir," said she, in an assumed voice, and attempting still more effectually to conceal her face, can I confide to you a secret of the greatest importance?"

"Anything can be confided to me, madam; but I must know and see the person with whom I am conversing."

"Perhaps disguise is unnecessary, as I am aware that you are the soul of honor."

"To the point, madam, to the point. I have but little time to spare: there are those who are waiting for me. Who are you?"

"Never mind my name. A friend, a relative of mine, has just left your house."

"His name?"

"Florestan de Saint Remy."

"Ah! yes," said the notary; and he cast upon the Duchess a prying and inquisitive look, and said, "Well, madam?"

"The Viscount de Saint Remy has informed me of all that occurred here."

"What has he told you, madam?"

"All."

"But what in particular?"

"You know very well to what I allude."

"I know a great variety of things about the Viscount de Saint Remy, madam."

"I allude, sir, to this terrible affair."

"I know many terrible things about the man."

"He told me, sir, that you were merciless."

"To swindlers and forgers like him, I confess that I show but little mercy. If this Saint Remy is a relative of yours, instead of confessing it, you should blush at the disgrace; and if you come here with the hope of moving me by your tears, you will find that your lamentations will be entirely useless; without mentioning the fact, that you are guilty of a very imprudent and disreputable act for an honest woman, if you really are one."

This brutal insolence wounded the pride and fired the patrician blood of the high-born lady. She raised her head, threw back her veil, and with a proud and haughty mien, an imperious look, and an undaunted voice, said:

"I am the Duchess de Lucenay, sir."

The appearance and attitude of the aristocratic lady was so noble and imposing, that the impassible notary was cowed before her. He drew back in silent deference, removed instinctively the black silk cap which covered his head, and made her a profound obeisance.

Nothing could be more beautiful and majestic than the face and figure of this distinguished lady. She was at this period full thirty years of age. Her face was somewhat pale and careworn; but her large dark eyes still shone with all their pride and lustre. Her ruby lip curled with its wonted haughtiness; her complexion was brilliant; her teeth dazzling; her figure was tall and commanding, and her walk like that of a goddess on the clouds,* as the immortal Saint Simon says. With that flashing eye, the Duchess, in the grand costume of the eighteenth century, would have well represented, both in her mental and physical developments, one of those adventurous duchesses who figured during the Regency; who mingled with their innumerable amours so much ease, carelessness, humor, and piquant good-nature; who apologized for their peccadilloes with such frankness and *naïveté*, that the most censorious moralists were forced to smile and say, "She is very light, very capricious, exceedingly culpable; but then she adheres to her temporary inamorato with such self-sacrificing devotion, such constancy and passion, that one is almost compelled to pardon her error. She ruins only herself, and makes so many happy." With the exception of the powder and the hoops, the Duchess de Lucenay, when her mind was not preoccupied by gloomy thoughts, was very much like one of those beings.

She had entered the office of the notary, apparently, as a woman of plebeian rank; but when her pride was wounded by the rudeness of the notary, she flashed upon him as a noble, haughty, and irritated patrician. Never before had the eyes of Jacques Ferrand encountered a goddess, whose face and whose figure seemed so harmoniously designed to illustrate the irresistible power of beauty; that anxious expression, the delicate azure hue which encircled those brilliant eyes, that dilated nostril, all announced one of those ardent natures which a certain class of men adore with as much madness as passion. Jacques Ferrand, though himself old, ugly, and disgusting, was keenly susceptible to the peculiar style of the Duchess de Lucenay's beauty. The interest which this beautiful and captivating woman felt in the Viscount de Saint Remy, redoubled the hatred and anger of the notary against him. Distracted by all kinds of unholy passions, the monster was inspired with rage at the thought, that the conceited forger whom he had almost brought to his feet by threatening him with the assizes, had inspired with so much love this beautiful and high-born lady, that she was willing to risk for his sake a step which might prove her ruin. With these thoughts, the insolence of the notary, which had been partially paralyzed, returned. Hatred, envy, a sort of ferocious resentment, mingled with the still more degraded vice that inflamed his face and forehead. Perceiving that the Duchess de Lucenay was about to enter upon a conversation of so much delicacy, he anticipated from her great precaution and finesse in approaching the subject: his amazement may then be imagined, when the Duchess addressed him with as calm and haughty assurance as if their interview related to the most unexceptionable matter of business; and as if the propriety and reserve which she would have maintained with her equals, was entirely supererogatory with a person of his class. The insolent vulgarity of the notary had compelled her to surrender the humble character, which she had with great repugnance assumed, and to reveal her real position; as if duplicity and management were too great a condescension to such a scribbler of deeds.

The Duchess de Lucenay in spite of her faults, was refined, charitable, generous; she was the daughter of a woman who, by her revolting immorality, had degraded the holy misfortune of emigration. But the Duchess had such a contempt for the opinions of certain classes, that she evinced the same supreme unconsciousness of their existence, as a Roman Empress did of her slaves.

"Mr. Notary," said she, respectfully, "the Viscount de Saint Remy is one of my friends; he has avowed to me the embarrassment in which he is placed, by being made the victim of a double treachery. Money can arrange everything; what amount is needed to put an end to this vexatious trick?"

Jacques Ferrand was struck aghast by this calabiere and business-like manner of treating the matter.

"They ask one hundred thousand francs," said he in a gruff tone, and conquering in some measure, his surprise.

"You shall have the one hundred thousand francs; send immediately these troublesome documents to the Viscount de Saint Remy."

"Where are the one hundred thousand francs, Duchess de Lucenay?"

"Have I not given you my word that you shall have that sum?"

"It must be produced before to-morrow at noon, or the accusation of forgery will be laid before the authorities."

"Very well; pay over that sum and I will be accountable for it; as for yourself, you shall be liberally remunerated."

"But, madam, it is impossible."

"You do not expect me to believe, that a notary like yourself, cannot raise one hundred thousand francs from one day to the next?"

"On what securities, madam?"

"What do you mean? explain yourself."

"Who will be responsible to me for that amount?"

"Myself."

"But, madam ——"

"Must I tell you, that I have an estate which yields me eighty thousand francs, only four leagues from Paris? That I think will serve for what you call securities."

"Yes, madam; with a mortgage."

"What does that word mean? Some formality, I suppose: very well; do it."

"'T will take a fortnight to execute an act of that kind; besides, your husband must be made a party."

"But the estate of which I speak belongs to me—to me alone," said the Duchess impatiently.

"No matter, madam; you are under the control of your husband, and a deed of mortgage is very long and minute."

"But once more, sir; you cannot make me believe that it is impossible for you to find one hundred thousand francs within two hours."

"You must apply then, to your own notary or steward, madam; it is impossible for me."

"I have reasons, sir," said the Duchess, with unbending pride; "for concealing my interference in this business. You are acquainted with the rogue who harasses the Viscount, and that is the reason that I apply to you."

"I am highly honored by your confidence, madam; but I cannot perform what you solicit."

"Have you not this amount?"

"I have much more than that sum in bank notes, and in good current gold, here in my vault."

"Why then, so many words! is it my signature which you want? I will give it to you; let us finish this business."

"Admitting, madam, that you are in fact the Duchess de Lucenay ——"

"Come in an hour's time to the Hotel de Lucenay, and I will place my signature to whatever you desire."

"Will the Duke sign also?"

"I do not understand you, sir."

"Your signature alone, is worthless, madam."

The notary enjoyed, with a high degree of satisfaction, the impatience of the Duchess, who, under this apparent composure, concealed the most painful anxiety. She was at this moment entirely destitute of any resources. She had, on the previous day, raised a large amount of money upon her jewels; a few of which had been confided to Morel, the lapidary. This sum had been appropriated to discharge the drafts of the Viscount de Saint Remy, and quiet some of his other creditors. Mr. Dubreuil, the farmer of Arnouville, had already advanced a year's

* "Et in incessu pari decoris non femineæ."

rent; the time allowed to find the amount was very short, and unfortunately also, for the Duchess, two of her friends to whom she might have applied in an emergency, were absent from Paris. She believed the Viscount guiltless of the forgery, for he had assured her so, and she thought him the dupe of two swindlers; but it could not be denied that his situation was none the less embarrassing. Could she endure the thought of seeing *him* accused! of seeing him dragged to prison! Should he attempt to fly, his name would, nevertheless, be branded with infamous suspicions. The Duchess de Lucenay shrunk from the contemplation of such a catastrophe; for that man, in such a dishonored position, she cherished one of those blind and overmastering passions, peculiar to women of her temperament, when the first bloom of youth has faded and the emotions have become strengthened and matured.

Jacques Ferrand studied, attentively, the countenance of the Duchess, which grew more and more beautiful the longer his eyes dwelt upon it. His debased and constrained admiration increased in its ardor, and he derived a sort of fiendish delight in torturing, by his refusal, a woman who could only entertain for him disgust and contempt. The Duchess revolted from the thought of addressing to him any words which might be construed into an entreaty or appeal; but despairing of assistance from any other source, she determined to speak to him.

"Since you have in your possession the sum which I ask, why do you refuse me?"

"Because, men sometimes act from caprice, as well as women."

"What can the caprice be, which induces you to act against your interest? for I repeat to you, that whatever proposals you may make, I will accept."

"Will you accept any proposal, madam?" said the notary, in a peculiar tone.

"Yes, any. You may charge two, three, or four thousand francs more if you wish, for I will tell you frankly," said the Duchess, in a tone that was almost affectionate, "I have, at present, no other resource but yourself to which I can apply. I cannot obtain, elsewhere, the sum by to-morrow, and I must have it. Do you hear me? I must positively have it, and whatever proposal you make for the service, I will accept, indifferent to the cost."

The respiration of the notary became quicker; his temples throbbed, his face was purple, and the glasses of his spectacles concealed the unnatural flame of his eye; an obscure cloud seemed to pass over the usually clear and cautious intellect of the man, and he appeared, for a moment, dispossessed of his reason. In his distempered blindness, he placed a false construction upon the language of the Duchess, and his darkened intelligence presented her as one of those females commemorated in ancient story, who, driven to despair at some awful calamity which threatened those they loved, were ready to encounter any sacrifice for their deliverance. This construction was as stupid as it was infamous; but we have said, that at times Jacques Ferrand was the victim of a mania which assimilated him to the tiger and the wolf: he arose abruptly, and approached the Duchess.

The highborn lady arose also, overwhelmed with surprise.

"You will accept any proposal—you will not regard the cost?" said he in a fluttered tone, still continuing to approach the Duchess. "Well, then, I will lend you the sum on one condition, only on one condition, and I swear to you that——"

He was unable to complete his declaration. By one of those freaks of human nature, by which the ludicrous has sufficient power to drown for an instant the keenest anguish and the most poignant grief, the sight of Mr. Ferrand's grotesque and enamored visage, had such an irresistible effect upon the Duchess, that she interrupted the sentence of the notary with a laugh so merry, so noisy, so ringing, that he started back in stupefied amazement; and without giving him time to utter a word, she surrendered herself to still more hilarious laughter. She dropped her veil over her face, and between her bursts of merriment, just found time to say in broken sentences, while the notary was overpowered with hatred, rage and fury, "Thank you, thank you; I had rather frankly apply to the Duke de Lucenay," and the Duchess departed, laughing as she went, in such a boisterous fit of mirth, that although she closed the door behind her, the notary could still hear the peals ringing in his ears.

Jacques Ferrand recovered his reason to curse bitterly his insane folly and impudence, but consoled himself with the reflection, that the Duchess could not allude to the interview without compromising her own character. Nevertheless, the present had been an unfortunate day for the exemplary notary, and he was plunged in the most gloomy meditations, when the door of the private staircase opened, and Madam Seraphin approached, evidently in deep emotion.

"Ah, Ferrand, you were right," exclaimed she, clasping her hands; "you had good reason for saying that it might one day be the ruin of us if we suffered *her* to live."

"Who?"

"That cursed little girl."

"How so?"

"A one-eyed woman whom I never saw before, and to whom Tournemine gave in charge the little girl, when we wished to get clear of her, fourteen years ago, under the pretence that she was dead —— Oh, Heaven! who could have believed it?"

"Speak! speak!"

"The one-eyed woman has been here; she was down stairs but a moment since; she told me that she knew that I was the woman who gave up the child."

"Damnation! who could have informed her? Tournemine is in the galleys."

"I denied everything, and told the one-eyed woman that it was all a lie; but it was of no use. She pretends that she has found the little girl, who has now grown up; that she knows where she is, and that it is in her power to discover the whole affair and denounce everybody."

"It seems to me as if hell was let loose upon me to-day," said the notary, in a burst of rage, which imparted a still more hideous expression to his face.

"But what shall I say to this one-eyed hag? what shall I promise her in order to keep her quiet?"

"Does she look like a woman in easy circumstances?"

"When I called her a beggar, she showed me her bag: there was money in it."

"And does she know where the young girl is now?"

"She pretends that she does."

"And she is the daughter of the Countess Sarah McGregor," said the notary to himself; "and this morning she offered me any given amount of money to affirm that she was not dead. Her daughter still lives, and I can restore her; but then that forged certificate of death: if inquiries are instituted, I am lost. That one crime discovered will fire the train to all the others." After a moment's thought, he again asked Madam Seraphin, "Does theone-eyed woman knowwhere the child is to be found?"

"She pretends that she does."

"And is the woman coming back?"

"To-morrow."

"Write to Polidori to call and see me this evening, at nine o'clock."

"Would you get rid of the old woman and the young girl also? That would be too much for one operation, Ferrand."

"I tell you to write to Polidori, to be here this evening, at nine o'clock."

Toward the end of the day, Rodolphe said to Murph, who had been unable to gain an interview with the notary, "Let Baron de Graün dispatch a courier this very moment. Cecile must be in Paris within six days."

"What! for that infernal woman, the execrable wife of poor David, as beautiful as she is infamous? Pray, what good can result from it, my lord?"

"What good, Sir Walter Murph? Within a month, you may ask that question of Mr. Jacques Ferrand."

END OF PART THE FOURTH.

PART THE FIFTH.

CHAPTER I..... DENUNCIATION.

THE day of the abduction of Fleur de Marie by Chouette and the Schoolmaster, a man, mounted on horseback, had arrived, about ten o'clock in the evening, at the farm of Bouqueval. He said that he was sent by Mr. Rodolphe, to comfort Madam George as to the disappearance of Fleur de Marie, and to inform her that she would shortly return. "For very important reasons," continued the man, "Mr. Rodolphe desires, if you have anything to communicate, not to write to him at Paris, but forward the letter by this express, who will take it in charge." This emissary was in the employment of Sarah McGregor, and she hoped, by this ruse, to tranquillize the mind of Madam George, and delay the information of Goualeuse's disappearance

from reaching Rodolphe's ears. During the interval, the Countess hoped to persuade the notary to favor her base stratagem for substituting a child, of which we have already spoken. Nor was this all: the Countess was desirous of ruining the Marchioness d'Harville in the estimation of Rodolphe. The day after the Marquis d'Harville had followed his wife to the house in the rue du Temple, Tom went there, and easily engaging in conversation with Madam Pipelet, learned from her, that a lady, who was on the point of being surprised by her husband, was rescued by the ingenuity of one of her lodgers, by the name of Rodolphe.

Sarah, having received from her brother this information, and possessing no satisfactory proof of the interview which Clemence had granted to Mr. Charles Robert, conceived another iniquitous project, so as to destroy all harmony between Rodolphe and the Marquis, or at least infuse such suspicions into the mind of the latter, as to lead him to forbid his wife from receiving the visits of the Prince. She concluded to address to the Marquis an anonymous letter, couched in the following language:

"You have been basely deceived. The other day your wife, being aware that you were in pursuit of her, contrived a fictitious scheme of benevolence. She really went to that house to meet with *a certain august person*, who has taken a room on the fifth floor, under the name of Rodolphe. If you doubt these facts, as they may appear somewhat singular to you, go tomorrow to No. 17, rue du Temple, and institute inquiries; describe the features of the august person alluded to, and you will easily perceive, that you are one of the most credulous and good-natured husbands that was ever *sovereignly* deceived. Do not neglect this admonition, or it may be believed that you are altogether too friendly with the *Prince*."

This note was mailed about five o'clock in the afternoon, by the Countess, on the same day that she held her conversation with the notary.

Upon the same evening Rodolphe, after having given instructions to the Baron de Graün to hasten the arrival of Cecile at Paris, went to call on the Embassadress of * * *, with the intention of afterward visiting the Marchioness, for the purpose of informing her that he had discovered a charitable intrigue which was worthy of her attention.

We will anticipate the arrival of Rodolphe at the Hotel d'Harville, and introduce the reader to a conversation which took place between the Marchioness d'Harville and her husband, from which it will be seen that Clemence, by showing herself generous and sympathizing toward her husband, whom she had recently treated with so much coldness and indifference, was already following the noble advice of Rodolphe. The Marquis had not yet received the anonymous letter which was intended for his hands. The following scene occurred in the small parlor which we have already described. The Marquis and his wife had recently left the table; the expression of Clemence was mild and affectionate, and her husband seemed less melancholy than usual.

"How do you intend to spend the evening?" said the Marquis, in a careless tone, to his wife.

"I shall not go out. What do you intend to do?"

"I do not know," he replied, with a sigh. "Society is insupportable to me. I presume I shall spend this evening, as I have spent so many others—alone."

"Why alone, since I also shall remain at home?"

The Marquis looked at his wife with manifest surprise.

"Certainly. But I supposed——"

"What?"

"I supposed that when you did not visit, you would prefer to spend your evenings in solitude."

"But you know also that I am very capricious," said Clemence, smiling; "and this evening I should like to share my solitude with you. If, however, it is not agreeable to you——"

"How amiable you are, Clemence," said the Marquis, with emotion, "to anticipate a wish which I had not the courage to express."

"Do you not perceive, my dear friend, that your surprise is almost equivalent to a reproach!"

"A reproach? oh! no, no! But after my absurd jealousy of the other day, this kind and affectionate treatment is, I confess, a very agreeable surprise."

"Let us forget the past," said she, with a smile of angel-like sweetness.

"Can you ever forget it, my dear Clemence? Have I not had the cruelty to suspect you? How can I express to what extremity a blind jealousy might not have driven me? But what is this, compared with the much more reprehensible wrongs you have suffered from me?"

"Let us forget the past, I repeat," said Clemence, suppressing a painful emotion.

"What do I hear? And can *you* forget the past? Will you forget it?"

"I hope to do so."

"Can it be true? Can I hope for such generosity? It is a happiness which I had renounced for ever."

"You now see that you were wrong."

"What a change in my whole futurity. Is it a dream? Oh! assure me that I am not deceived."

"You are not deceived."

"It is true, your expression is less forbidding; your voice is almost affectionate. Assure me that I am not under an illusion."

"No: for I need pardon myself."

"You?"

"Have I not often been unkind and cruel toward you? Ought I not to have supposed that you must have been endowed with more than human virtue and fortitude, to have acted otherwise than you have done? Forlorn and unhappy as you were, could you resist the desire of seeking some solace in the society of a wife! Alas! when we are in misery, are we not apt to rely more upon the generosity of others? I will endeavor, henceforth to show you, that your confidence in me has not been misplaced."

"Speak again! speak again!" said the Marquis d'Harville, with his hands clasped in ecstacy.

"Our lives are for ever bound together; and I shall do all in my power to make your existence less insupportable."

"Good Heaven! Is it you, Clemence, who are speaking to me?"

"Do not, I beg of you, display so much surprise; it is an implied censure on my past conduct. Who should have sympathized with you! Who should have put forth a friendly and consoling hand, if not myself? A kind inspiration has visited my mind; I have reflected, yes, maturely reflected upon the past and the future. I confess my wrongs; and I have found, I hope, the way to avoid them hereafter."

"Your wrongs, unfortunate lady."

"Yes: I ought on the morning after our wedding-day to have appealed to your magnanimity, and have asked you, explicitly, for a separation."

"Oh, Clemence! have compassion upon me, spare me!"

"But as I did not adopt this course, and virtually accepted of my situation, after being fully aware of all its peculiarities, I ought to have consoled my regrets, by devotion to your welfare, instead of being an incessant cause of unhappiness, by my indifference and selfishness. I should have endeavored to alleviate, in some degree, the misfortune with which you are afflicted. I should then have gradually become attached to the duty of commiseration, even on account of the self-denial and sacrifices which it imposed, and I should have found an abundant recompense in your gratitude. But, good Heaven! what afflicts you, my friend? you weep."

"Yes, I shed tears; but they are of joy. You cannot conceive of the new emotion with which your words have inspired me. Suffer me to weep; for never before have I been so impressed with my guilt, in chaining you to such a miserable being as I am."

"And I never have felt more disposed to pardon you. These tears of joy, which you have shed, reveal to me that I can inspire you with a degree of happiness, of which I did not dream was in my power to excite. Have courage, then, my dear husband. Instead of a distinguished and brilliant career, let us seek contentment in the faithful discharge of those domestic duties which Providence has imposed. Let us be indulgent to each other; and if we should ever falter in this resolution, let us turn our eyes to the cradle of our child; let us concentrate upon her all our affections, and a serene and holy enjoyment will at least be ours."

"You are an angel! an angel!" exclaimed the Marquis d'Harville, clasping his hands together, and contemplating his wife with the most exalted admiration. "You cannot imagine what mingled emotions of pleasure and remorse your words inspire. Your bitterest reproaches, your severest invectives, have never so completely crushed me, as your magnanimous kindness, your generous resignation. In spite of myself, I will dare to hope, and to cast forward my eyes to a delightful future."

"And you may place, Albert, a most implicit confidence in the words which I have spoken. I have formed this resolution with deliberation; and I shall adhere to it most faithfully, I assure you. At some future day, I will give you evidence of my assertion."

"Evidence!" exclaimed the Marquis, more and more exalted

with a happiness which he had so little anticipated. "Evidence! I need none. Your look, your accent, that expression of divine commiseration which illumines your countenance; the delight inspired in me, the throbbings of my heart; are not these sufficient proof that you speak the words of truth? But you know, dear Clemence, that man is insatiable in his hopes," continued the Marquis, approaching the fauteuil of his wife. "Your noble and touching words have awakened within me a hope of which, yesterday, I did not dare to dream."

"Explain yourself, I beg of you!" said Clemence, somewhat agitated by these words of her husband.

"Yes," said he, taking the hand of his wife, "yes, Clemence; by unintermitted kindness, by tenderness, which knows neither limit nor degree, by the entire devotion of my soul, by boundless love, I hope to win your own; to inspire you, not with the mere affection which conjugal duty imposes, but with a passion as ardent and unreserved as my own. Whenever I have presumed to speak to you of it, you have always displayed so much indifference, so much coldness; you have never spoken words of kindness to me—such words as have drawn tears from my eyes this evening, and overpowered me with happiness. My love for you has deserved a joy as great; and, hitherto, I have only been rewarded by silent suffering. The melancholy which devoured me, my distaste for all society, my gloomy thoughts, proceeded solely from such a cause. Imagine my distress, my despair, my weary vigils, while conscious that her repugnance separates me from a wife that I adore, with all the ardor and endearments of love; a wife who was sheltered by the same roof with myself. If you were conscious of the tears which I have shed, of the anguish which I have suffered, it would have moved you. What do I say? It has moved you! You have imagined my anguish, and will now show me compassion. The sight of your ineffable beauty and enchanting graces, will not now be my daily misfortune; the treasure which I prize above all things earthly, will be mine. My heart, my joy, my fancy, all inform me that it will be so, my wife, my dearest wife!" and he covered her hand with passionate kisses. Clemence suddenly withdrew her hand. Her countenance assured the Marquis that he had misconstrued her feelings.

The blow was a terrible one. The darkest cloud passed over the face of the Marquis, and he relapsed into his habitual gloom. The Marchioness tenderly returned her hand, and said:

"Albert, I shall always be the most devoted of friends, the most affectionate of sisters. Pardon me, if my words have awakened hopes which I never can fulfil."

"Never!" exclaimed the Marquis, casting upon his wife a supplicating gaze.

"Never!" And the accent with which the word was uttered, revealed the unalterable, irrevocable resolution of his wife.

Clemence, restored to her natural generosity and kindness of heart, by the councils of Rodolphe, had determined to lavish upon the Marquis the tenderest regard; but she was too true to the holy instinct within her, to affect an emotion which she did not feel. An impression, more unconquerable than fear, hatred, or contempt—an inexpressible repugnance—separated the Marchioness for ever from her husband.

After a painful moment of silence, the Marquis passed his hand over his moistened eyes, and said to his wife in a heart-broken tone:

"Pardon me for my error! Pardon the hope which I have indulged."

There was another painful pause, and he exclaimed:

"How miserably wretched I am!"

"My dear friend," said Clemence, most gently, "I do not wish to address to you undeserved reproaches; but do you regard as nothing my promise to be to you the most affectionate sister? You will receive from my devoted friendship, more kindness and attention, than love could bestow. I pray of you to hope for happier days. You have thus far found me almost indifferent to your sorrows; but you will now find great consolation in my sympathy and affection."

A valet now entered, and announced his royal Highness, the Grand Duke of Gerolstein, and asked if the Marchioness would receive a call?

Clemence cast an inquiring glance toward her husband.

The Marquis recovered his composure, and said to his wife, "Certainly."

The valet left the room.

"Pardon me, my dear!" said Clemence, "but I gave no orders respecting the door, and as it is a long time since you have seen the Prince, he will be happy to find you here."

"I am ever happy to see him; but I am so agitated at this moment, that I wish he had postponed his call to some other day."

"I understand you; but what can we do? He is coming;" and at this moment Rodolphe entered the room. "I am exceedingly fortunate, Marchioness, in finding you at home. And my gratification is redoubled, since it also has procured me the pleasure of greeting you, my dear Albert," he added, turning to the Marquis, whose hand he cordially grasped.

"It is indeed very long, my lord, since I have had the pleasure of paying my respects to you."

"And whose fault is it, thou invisible one? The first time I waited upon the Marchioness, I inquired for you, and you were absent. It is now three weeks since you have been apparently unconscious of my existence. It is very wrong."

"Show him no mercy, my lord," said Clemence, with a smile. "The Marquis is the more to blame, because I know that he entertains for your royal Highness the greatest respect and esteem, and his negligence might induce you to doubt it."

"You can judge of my vanity, Marchioness, when I assure you, that whatever the Marquis may do, it will always be impossible for me to doubt his affection; but I confess I should not say this, for I fear it will encourage his negligence."

"Believe me, my lord, that many unforeseen circumstances, have prevented me from enjoying more frequently, the society with which you honor me."

"Between us, my dear Albert, I think that you are rather too platonic in your friendships: assured of being loved, you do not seem anxious to give or receive proofs of attachment."

By a breach of etiquette, at which the Marchioness was slightly annoyed, a valet entered, bringing a letter to the Marquis. It was the anonymous denunciation in which the Countess accused Rodolphe of being the lover of the Marchioness.

The Marquis, out of deference to the Prince, pushed back the small silver salver, which held the letter, and said to the valet in a low voice, "presently."

"My dear Albert," said Rodolphe, in a cordial tone; "why such ceremony with me?"

"My lord!"

"With the permission of the Marchioness, I beg of you to read the letter."

"I assure you, my lord, that I am in no haste."

"Once more, I beseech you to read it."

"But, my lord ——"

"I insist upon it."

"Since your royal Highness insists," said the Marquis, taking the letter from the salver.

"Certainly, I insist upon your treating me as a friend." Then turning to the Marchioness, while her husband was breaking the seal of the fatal billet, the contents of which Rodolphe did not suspect, he said, smiling:

"What a triumph it is for you, Marchioness, to force such an obstinate will to yield."

The Marquis d'Harville went to one of the lights on the mantelpiece, and opened the letter.

CHAPTER II.....A CONSULTATION.

THE Marchioness and Rodolphe continued talking, while the Marquis perused and reperused the billet of the Countess. The features of the Marquis remained calm; a nervous trembling of the hand, almost imperceptible, alone indicated his emotion. After a moment's hesitation, he placed the letter in the pocket of his vest.

"At the risk of being again regarded as a recluse, I must solicit permission from you, my lord," said the Marquis, smiling, "to retire and answer this letter, which is more important than I at first supposed."

"Shall I not see you again this evening?"

"I do not think I shall have that honor, my lord. I hope your royal Highness will excuse me."

"What a difficult man to serve!" said Rodolphe gayly. "Will you not try to retain him, Marchioness?"

"I dare not attempt a task in which your royal Highness has failed."

"Seriously my dear Albert, try to return as soon as your letter is written; if not, promise to grant me a few moments, some morning. I have a thousand things which I wish to tell you."

"Your royal Highness is very kind," said the Marquis, making a low bow, and he retired, leaving Clemence with the Prince.

"Your husband seems to be laboring under some distress of mind; his smile appeared to me to be forced."

"When your royal Highness first entered, the Marquis was powerfully moved; and he had great difficulty in concealing it from you."

"I arrived, perhaps, at an unfortunate time."

"No, my lord; you interrupted a conversation which was becoming very painful to me."

"How so?"

"I had informed the Marquis of the new course of conduct which I had determined to pursue toward him, promising him all the sympathy and consolation in my power to bestow."

"How happy he must have felt?"

"At first, he was as much delighted as I was myself. His tears, his joy, awakened emotions which were novel to me. Formerly, I consulted my revenge by addressing reproaches and invectives to him, but it was a revenge which reacted upon myself. But how different were my feelings this evening! I asked my husband if he was going out; he replied to me, 'That he should spend the evening as he had frequently done—alone.' I invited him to remain with me. You should have seen, my lord, how radiant with joy his ever-gloomy features suddenly became. You were certainly right; nothing is more delightful than to surprise with sudden happiness."

"But how did such tokens of kindness induce the painful conversation to which you have alluded?"

"Alas! my lord," said Clemence, blushing; "to the hopes which I had encouraged, because it was in my power to fulfill them, succeeded others which I had endeavored scrupulously to suppress, because it will be for ever impossible for me to gratify them."

"I understand you."

"As much as I have been moved by his gratitude, so much the more was I alarmed when his language became passionate; and, finally, when in his exaltation, he touched his lips to my hand, a mortal chill assailed me; I could not conceal my repugnance, and wounded his feelings grievously. The Marquis is now convinced, that he never can expect anything from me but the most affectionate and devoted friendship."

"I pity him, without being able to blame you. There are some susceptibilities almost sacred. Poor Albert! so good, so upright, of such a noble heart and magnanimous soul! I have for a long time most keenly sympathized with the sorrow that devours him, though I was entirely ignorant of the cause. Let us hope everything from the effect of time, and from the operation of his own rational understanding. He will soon become sensible of the value of that affection which you proffer; and he will submit with resignation, as he has before done, when he did not enjoy the relief which your sympathy and consolation must afford."

"And which hereafter shall never fail, my lord."

"But let us now direct our thoughts to the misfortunes of others. I promised you a charitable enterprise, having all the interest of a romance, and I have come to fulfil my promise."

"So soon, my lord? what happiness it will afford!"

"It was a happy inspiration which directed my attention to that room in the rue du Temple, of which I spoke. You cannot imagine all the touching and interesting scenes of which I have been a spectator. In the first place, your protegés in the garret are in the enjoyment of all the happiness which you promised, and yet they have had great trials to endure. But I do not wish to make you melancholy: I will inform you some day how many evils can overwhelm a single family."

"How excessive must be their gratitude to you."

"It is your name which they bless."

"You have then assisted them in my name, my lord?"

"So as to wound their sensibility the less. Besides, I only fulfilled your promises."

"I shall go and undeceive them, and inform them how much they are obliged to you."

"I beg of you not to do that. You know that I have a room in that house, and you will be exposed to a new anonymous attack from your enemies or mine. Besides, the Morels are now entirely relieved from want, and there are others who demand all our attention. Let us think of the benevolent intrigue to which I allude. It relates to a poor mother and her daughter, who were once in affluence, but now, in consequence of an infamous fraud, are reduced to most abject poverty."

"Unfortunate females! Where is their place of residence, my lord!"

"I do not know."

"But how did you become acquainted with their misery?"

"I went yesterday to the Temple, with the peculiarities of which I suppose you are entirely unacquainted."

"I confess it, my lord."

"It is a very curious bazar, I assure you. I went there with my voisine to make a few purchases."

"Your voisine!"

"Do I not reside in the rue du Temple?"

"I am very forgetful, my lord."

"My voisine is a most charming grisette. Her name is Rigolette; she laughs constantly, and never had a lover."

"What unparalleled virtue for a grisette!"

"She does not attribute her unexceptionable conduct to virtue precisely, but says that she has not sufficient leisure to fall in love, that she cannot afford the time; for she is obliged to work from twelve to fifteen hours a day, to earn the twenty-five sous upon which she lives."

"Can she sustain existence on so small a sum?"

"Certainly. She supplies herself with every necessity, and even keeps, as a sort of luxury, two birds, who eat more than she does herself. Her little room is a perfect pattern of neatness, and her dress exceedingly coquettish."

"She must be a miracle of thrift, to live upon twenty-five sous a day."

"She is a prodigy of order, economy, industry, and practical philosophy, I assure you. I recommend her to your patronage. She professes to be a perfect adept with her needle: at any rate you would not be obliged to wear the clothes which she may make."

"To-morrow I will send her some work. Poor girl! to be compelled to live entirely upon a sum which is so inconsiderable in the expenditure of the rich, that our most trifling caprice costs a hundred times that amount."

"I am rejoiced that you have determined to interest yourself in my little protegé. I will now explain our new adventure. I had gone to the Temple with Mademoiselle Rigolette, to purchase some furniture designed for the poor people in the garret, when upon accidentally examining an old secretary which was for sale, I found the draft of a letter written by a female to some individual, in which she complained that herself and daughter were reduced to the greatest misery on account of the dishonesty of a fiduciary. The secretary was a part of a lot of furniture, which a woman of middle age had been compelled by her penury to sell; and I was told by the dealer, that the woman and her daughter seemed to belong to the upper classes of society, and to bear their reverses with great fortitude and pride."

"And you do not know where they reside?"

"I have, unfortunately, not been able to discover; but I have given orders to the Baron de Graün to learn where they live, and to apply if necessary to the head of police. It is probable, that since they have been stripped of everything, the mother and daughter have taken lodgings in some poor furnished apartments. If that is the case, I have strong hopes; for the proprietors of such houses are in the habit of reporting daily all the new arrivals."

"What a singular concurrence of circumstances!" said the Marchioness; "how attractive these investigations must be!"

"I have not yet told you all. In one corner of the letter which I found in the old secretary, these words were written: '*Write to the Duchess de Lucenay.*'"

"How fortunate! Perhaps we may be able to gain some information from the Duchess. But as we do not know the name of the lady, how shall we be able to describe her?" added the Marchioness, in a less joyful tone.

"It will be necessary to ask her whether she is not acquainted with a widow still young, of an imposing countenance, and whose daughter, of sixteen or seventeen years of age, is named Claire: I remember the name."

"It is the name of my own girl! It is a new motive for me to interest myself in these people."

"I forgot to mention to you, that the brother of this unfortunate lady committed suicide several months ago."

"If the Duchess de Lucenay is at all acquainted with the family, I think that this information will recall it to her mind: the melancholy death of the brother must alone have made an impression upon her. I desire very much to hasten to her immediately. I will certainly write to her this evening, so as to secure an interview with her to-morrow morning. Who are these unfortunate beings? From what you know of their history, my lord, they seem to be connected with the higher orders of society, and their distress and misery must on that account carry with it a twofold sting."

"And to this wretchedness they have been reduced by the theft of a notary—an infamous rogue, whose crimes are without number—a certain Jacques Ferrand."

"The notary of my husband!" exclaimed Clemence; "the notary of my stepmother! But are you not mistaken, my lord? Mr. Ferrand is considered one of the most honest men in the world."

"I have convincing evidence that he has imposed upon public credulity. But I beg of you not to disclose my suspicions, or rather my convictions, concerning the reprobate; for he is as

adroit as he is criminal, and in order to unmask him effectually, it is necessary for him to believe that at present he is perfectly secure from detection. Yes; he is the man who has reduced these unfortunate females to want, by disowning a deposite confided to his hands by the brother of this afflicted widow."

"And what was the sum?"

"It embraced their entire property—it was their only dependence."

"What a crime!"

"A crime," exclaimed Rodolphe, "which has none of the ordinary palliatives of iniquity: neither want nor passion, neither the famine which drives to theft, nor the vengeance which excites to murder. The notary was rich; he was invested by society with an almost sacerdotal character—a character which solicited and enforced confidence; and had not excuse, but implacable cupidity for his crime. The knife of the assassin suddenly terminates existence and suffering; but Jacques Ferrand murders slowly, by torturing his victim to death by despair and misery. To this man, neither the hard-earned savings of the poor, nor the sole patrimony of the orphan, are sacred. Confide to him gold, and a temptation is presented which he cannot resist. He reduces to disconsolate beggary those who, by toil and privation, have provided for their old age food and shelter. This is not all! What a frightful train of consequences does his infamous peculation drag after it! Suppose the unfortunate widow, to whom we have alluded, should be taken from the life which he has rendered desolate; her daughter, young and captivating, without support, deprived of every resource, unfitted, by education, to earn her livelihood, and habituated to ease and affluence, is immediately placed between starvation and dishonor. By his infamous fraud, this notary would have been the author of the death of the mother, and the ruin of the daughter: would have killed the body of the one, and the soul of the other. Not, like the murderer, by a sudden blow, but by prolonging through life the agony of death!"

Clemence had never before heard Rodolphe speak with so much bitterness and indignation. She listened to him in silence, struck by an eloquence which, though severe, revealed an unconquerable hatred of crime.

"Pardon me, madam," said Rodolphe, after a few moments' silence; "I cannot restrain my emotions, when I think of the misfortunes to which this widow and her daughter may be exposed. Believe me, the consequences of poverty are seldom exaggerated."

"I am under obligations to you, my lord, for having, by this frightful exposure, increased, if possible, my lively sympathy for the unfortunate mother and her child. She must suffer the keenest anguish on her daughter's account. It is awful to contemplate! But we must succor—we must save them—we must give to them a futurity of joy! I am thankful to God, that I am rich: but not so wealthy as I desire to be, since I have found this new use for money. But, if necessary, I can apply to the Marquis d'Harville, and will render him so happy that he cannot refuse the indulgence of this new caprice: I perceive that, hereafter, I shall have many. You said, my lord, that our protegés were proud. I admire them the more on that account. Pride, in misfortune, always attends an elevated soul. I will discover the means of affording them relief; and at the same time conceal from them its source. It is true, that it will be difficult; but my enjoyment will be increased thereby. I have already a plan in my mind. You shall be satisfied, my lord, with my cunning and skill."

"I already foresee the most Machiavelian combination," said Rodolphe, smiling.

"But we must first discover them. I long for the arrival of to-morrow. After I have applied to the Duchess de Lucenay, I will go to their last residence: I will make inquiry of the neighbors; I will examine for myself. I should be so gratified, to arrive, through my own exertions, to the result I desire, I know I shall succeed. What a captivating adventure it is! Poor women! my interest for them increases, when I think of my own daughter."

A melancholy smile visited the face of Rodolphe, at observing the charitable eagerness with which a young woman of twenty years sought to forget, in benevolent enterprises, the afflictions which have fallen to her lot. The eyes of Clemence sparkled with unusual brilliancy; her cheeks were flushed with excitement, and the animation of her manner imparted a new charm to her fascinating countenance.

CHAPTER III.....THE SNARE.

THE Marchioness perceived that Rodolphe was observing her with attention and silence; she blushed slightly, and cast down her eyes, but quickly raising them, said with a confusion that was charming: "You laugh at my enthusiasm, my lord! it springs from my impatience to enjoy pursuits which will animate an existence, thus far, of unrelieved gloom. Such was not the futurity which I anticipated. I am forced, by my destiny, to relinquish for ever, a sentiment which is the source of the greatest happiness known below. I cannot indulge it without guilt," added the Marchioness with a sigh; "but thanks to you, my protector, I have created other interests for myself; charity will replace love. I am already indebted to your advice for the most novel and agreeable emotions. Your words, my lord, exert a controling influence upon me. Your ideas appear to me to be more right, kind and suggestive, the more I reflect and meditate upon them. And when I think that your interest did not terminate with merely pitying sorrows, which you might have regarded with indifference; but you followed up compassion with advice of the most salutary nature, and are now guiding, step by step, a suffering and sorrowful heart, in the new path which you have opened before me. My lord, what treasures of kindness reside in your soul! from what fountain has this sympathy sprung?"

"I have suffered much: I still suffer—that is the source of my susceptibility to the affliction of others."

"Are you unhappy? You, my lord?"

"Yes! it might be said, that in order to prepare me for a quick and lively sympathy with every misfortune, I have been compelled to endure them all; as a lover, my happiness was sacrificed by the woman whom I loved with all the ardent and confiding passions of youth; as a husband, sorrow reached me through my wife; as a son, I was unhappy in my father; as a father, I have been rendered miserable by the death of my child."

"I thought, my lord, that the Grand Duchess left you no children."

"Such was the fact; but before my marriage with her, I had a daughter whose death, though I scarcely ever saw her, has poisoned my whole life, and my sorrow increases as I advance in age; every year adds to its bitterness, and seems to proportion itself to the advancing age which my daughter would have attained. Had she lived, she would now have been seventeen years old."

"And is her mother still living?" asked Clemence, with some hesitation.

"Do not mention her," said Rodolphe, inspired with the most unpleasant thoughts, as his mind reverted to Sarah, "her mother is an unworthy creature, with a soul steeped in selfishness and ambition. I sometimes ask myself whether the death of my daughter ought not to be preferred, to her exposure to the influence of such a mother."

These expressions of Rodolphe, conveyed a certain kind of agreeable emotion to the mind of Clemence.

"I can readily imagine the double pang which you suffered in the loss of your daughter."

"I could have loved her with such an unreserved affection. It seems to me that with a prince, the interest which attaches to our sons is one of kindred name and political considerations. But a daughter! a daughter is loved solely on her own account. When one has been constantly exposed to the darker phases, the most revolting traits of human character, what solace and refreshment it affords to contemplate the perfect purity of a virgin soul; to breathe the clear atmosphere which surrounds it, to watch with an anxious tenderness the first development of thought, the first flight of innocent fancy, the first ingenuous transport! The fondest, proudest of mothers is too much herself like the daughter, to enjoy to its extent this exquisite pleasure. She would be touched nearer by the manly and daring qualities of a brave and accomplished son. Do you not know the secret which renders the love a mother has for her son, and a father for his daughter, so interesting? It is because, in each of these relations, there is a feebler being clinging to their affection for protection; the son protects the mother, the father the daughter."

"You are right, my lord."

"But why should the mind dwell upon these keen and elevated pleasures, when it is for ever debared from their enjoyment?" said Rodolphe, in a tone of touching grief.

Clemence could not restrain a tear, so distressing and melancholy was the accent of the Prince.

After a moment of silence, almost abashed by the emotion which he had allowed to gain an ascendency, he said with a sad smile, to the Marchioness:

"I hope you will pardon me; my regrets and bitter recollections, have for a moment overpowered me; you must excuse me."

"Believe me, my lord, that I partake of your sorrows; and I have the best right so to do, for you have partaken of mine: I only regret that I can offer you no consolation."

"The evidence that you are interested in my afflictions, is itself most agreeable, and I doubt not, will be salutary. It is almost a relief to inform one of whose kindness you feel assured, that you suffer; and I should not have spoken so much of my sorrows if the nature of our conversation had not revived painful memories. I know that it is a weakness, but I can scarcely hear a young girl mentioned, without reverting to the one whom I lost."

"The association is very natural. Since I saw you last, my lord, I have accompanied an acquaintance, who is a patroness of the work of the young inmates of Saint Lazare, to visit that prison; it contains many very culpable creatures. Had I not been a mother, I should have doubtless judged them with still more severity; but I could not restrain an emotion of compassion when I thought, that they would not have been lost unless they had been abandoned in childhood. I know not why it is, but after such reflections, it seems to me that I am attached by a still stronger love to my own daughter."

"Take courage, take courage," said Rodolphe, with a melancholy smile; "this conversation has removed all despondency from my mind concerning you; a safe path is now opened before you; by pursuing it, you will pass, without stumbling, through those years of life which are so dangerous to a female; especially to one so preëminently endowed as you are. You will have yet to encounter many struggles, much suffering, for you are still very young; but your strength will be sustained by the thought of the good you have already done, and may still do."

The Marchioness melted into tears. "I hope at least, my lord, that your advice, your support, will never fail me."

"Never fear: I shall always, take the greatest interest in all that concerns you; I shall always, to the very extent of my power, contribute to your happiness and to his to whom I have vowed the most enduring friendship."

"I thank you for the promise, my lord," said Clemence, drying her tears; "I am conscious, that without your assistance my strength would have abandoned me; and I now solemnly assure you, that I will courageously perform every duty."

At these words, a small door, concealed by the hangings, suddenly opened; Clemence uttered a cry, and even Rodolphe started. The Marquis d'Harville made his appearance, pale, agitated, with his eyes moistened with recent tears.

The first astonishment having subsided, the Marquis said, giving to the Prince the letter of the Countess:

"My lord, here is an infamous letter, which I just now received in your presence. Please to burn it up after you have read it."

Clemence looked at her husband with amazement.

"It is a most false and infamous denunciation," said Rodolphe with indignation.

"My lord, there is something still more base than this anonymous meanness."

"To what do you allude?"

"Instead of frankly and boldly disclosing to you this miserable fabrication, I concealed it from you. I assumed composure, while rage, jealousy, and despair were in my heart. And that is not all. I shamefully hid myself behind that door, in order to overhear your conversation; to act as a spy upon your conduct, wretched enough to distrust your fidelity and honor; the author of these letters must be well acquainted with the man to whom they are directed. He must know the jealousy of my disposition, and the weakness of my head. Tell me, my lord, what atonement I shall make to you! I have not lost a word of your conversation. I am aware of the motives which attract you to the rue du Temple. After having been credulous and base enough to become a virtual accomplice of this malicious calumniator, by yielding to him a momentary credence, ought I not upon my knees, to entreat your pity and solicit your forgiveness? I will do it, my lord. I will do it, Clemence; for my only hope is in your generosity."

"Good Heaven! My dear Albert, what have I to forgive?" said Rodolphe, extending both hands to the Marquis, with the utmost cordiality. "Now that you have become acquainted with our secrets, I can lecture you at pleasure. I have now forced myself into your confidence, and what is still better, you have become the confidant of the Marchioness, and know what you can anticipate from her noble soul."

"And you, Clemence," said the Marquis to his wife, "will you again forgive me!"

"Yes, on condition that you will aid me in securing your own happiness:" and she extended her hand to her husband, who pressed it with emotion.

"Well, my dear Marquis," exclaimed Rodolphe; "we have to thank our enemies for rendering us more intimate than we ever were before. They have also been to yourself the cause of a more just appreciation of the Marchioness. She was never more devoted to you than she is at present. Confess that we are nobly revenged for their malice and cruelty. We will content ourselves with it, until we can obtain a more satisfactory vengeance. I suspect the hand which aimed the shaft, and I am not accustomed to bear patiently injuries directed against my friends. It is also a personal attack upon myself. Farewell, Marchioness; since our intrigue is discovered, you will no longer be unaided in your efforts to succor our beneficiaries. We will soon concert some mysterious enterprise, and the Marquis must sharpen his cunning if he discovers it."

After having accompanied the Grand Duke to his carriage to renew his protestations, the Marquis retired to his room without seeing Clemence again.

CHAPTER IV. ..... REFLECTIONS.

It would be difficult to express the tumult and conflict of the Marquis d'Harville's emotions, when he found himself alone. He rejoiced at the exposure of the falsehood of the accusation against Rodolphe and Clemence, and he mourned most bitterly over the final prostration of the hope of securing her love. The generous and affectionate sentiments, which in her conversation with Rodolphe Clemence had evinced toward himself, presented, in the most vivid colors, the peculiar injustice of his culpable selfishness, in binding the unfortunate lady, by an indissoluble tie, to such a wretched destiny. Far from consoling him, the conversation which he had overheard had changed his despondency into despair. There is in a life of opulence without employment, this terrible evil—that nothing diverts the mind from its sorrows, nor prevents it from preying upon itself. Great mental afflictions have an uncontrolled ascendency in a mind which has no future necessities to contemplate, no daily labor to engross the attention. The possession of everything which gold can purchase, stimulates the desire, and deepens the regret, for what gold cannot secure.

The grief of the Marquis was desperate; and could only be relieved by the possession of that to which he was entitled by every legal and moral obligation; and he regarded as a bitter irony the maxim of law, that "the wife belongs to the husband." To what power could he appeal, to overcome a repugnance which destroyed his peace of mind, and separated him from the only being he could ever love? Must it not be acknowledged, that the sovereign will of the law is frequently subservient to the will of the parties to the marriage contract?

Paroxysms of despondency, succeed paroxysms of anger; and a dark and impenetrable cloud lowered over his whole future life. He feared that the hopeless sorrow in which he was plunged, would encourage the attacks of his relentless enemy.

"Alas!" he exclaimed, with a pang of despondency and remorse: "Alas! it is my own fault! I, alone, am responsible! Poor, unhappy woman! I most cruelly deceived her. She ought to hate me! and yet, but a moment since, she manifested the most touching interest in my welfare. But, instead of being satisfied with her assurances of affection, I must, with all the selfishness and folly of passion, speak to her of love; and hardly had my lips touched her hand, when she shrunk from me in fear and loathing. If, in the extreme of incredulity, I could yet doubt the invincible repugnance with which I inspire her, the disclosure she made to the Prince would have dissipated the illusion! What right had she to intrust him with the frightful secret? Was it not base and treacherous? What right? Alas! the same right which the victim has to complain of its destroyer. Poor child! so young, so loving! The severest reproach which she could utter against the misery to which I had condemned her, was 'that such was not the fate of which she had dreamed; and that she was very young to be compelled to relinquish love.' I know that Clemence will sacredly observe the promise which she has made; she will prove herself, henceforth, the most affectionate of sisters. Is not my situation to be envied? She might have continued to treat me with the greatest contempt and indifference, and I should not have been able to open my lips in complaint. But now, the cold and constrained intercourse which subsisted between us, is to be exchanged for the most affectionate and kindly relations. Well, well: I must console myself with what she condescends to grant. Shall I not be too fortunate, too much blessed! How weak, how cowardly I am! Is she not my wife? mine by every sanction, human and divine? Does not the law give me custody of her person? Have I not the right to——" He interrupted himself with a burst of sar-

donic laughter. "Oh! yes, yes! I had better add violence to my other infamy! But what resource remains? I love her—I love her to distraction! and can love no being but her. I desire that she should reciprocate my own feelings, and not speak of her sisterly regard. She must have compassion when her generous nature discovers how wretched I am. No: never, never! It is not in the nature of the female heart to overcome disgust. My frightful malady inspires her with horror—and will for ever: for ever! Do you hear that?" exclaimed the wretched man, wild with angulsh.

After a moment of gloomy meditation, he continued: "That anonymous letter came from an enemy's hand; and I was guilty of the injustice of suspecting the Prince of cool, premeditated treachery, and of including my wife in the infamous suspicion. Jealousy is incurable, and yet I must not be abused. If the Prince, who loves me as the most sincere and generous friend can love, promises to Clemence advice and support, and attempts to preoccupy her mind with benevolent enterprises, it must be because her heart needs protection against some other passion. So young, so beautiful, so admired, with no love to insure her fidelity, and with wrongs which might palliate her conduct, can I have implicit confidence in her purity? Another torture! How much I suffered when I believed her guilty! it was an idle fear. Clemence has sworn that she will not fail in any duty, and she will faithfully keep her promise—but at what a price! When she just now lavished affectionate words upon me, how her sad and resigned smile tortured me! How that return to her destroyer must have afflicted her! Her kind and patient resignation inspired me with the most excruciating remorse; for until then, she had revenged herself with haughty reproaches. Wretch! wretch that I am!"

After a sleepless night, disturbed by these bitter reflections, the agitation of the Marquis d'Harville ceased as if by enchantment. He waited with anxiety for the dawn of day.

CHAPTER V. ..... PROJECTS FOR THE FUTURE.

QUITE early in the morning, the Marquis d'Harville rang for his valet. The moment old Joseph entered his master's room, he heard him, to his great surprise, humming over a hunting song—a certain sign of good humor.

"What a fine voice you have, my lord!" said the old servant, moved by this indication of reviving happiness; "what a pity it is that you do not more frequently use it."

"Have I a fine voice, Joseph?" said the Marquis, laughing.

"Should my lord's voice be as hoarse as a screech owl's, 't would still be fine to me."

"Hold your tongue, old flatterer!"

"Well, my lord, when you sing, it is a sign that you are happy; and for that reason your voice seems to me the most delightful music in the world."

"If that is the case, old Joseph, you must prepare yourself, and open your long ears."

"What do you mean, my lord!"

"You will now enjoy daily the charming music of which you seem to be so fond."

"Do you intend to be cheerful every day?" said the old servant, clapping his hands with delight.

"Yes, every day, my old Joseph. No more sorrow, no more sadness: I can give that assurance to you, who are aware of all my troubles. I am filled with happiness. My wife is an angel of goodness. She has entreated my pardon for her past indifference, attributing her conduct—would you suspect it?—to jealousy."

"To jealousy!"

"Yes: absurd suspicions, created by anonymous letters."

"How infamous to write them!"

"Women have so much self-love, that such suspicions were sufficient to alienate her from me; but last evening she imparted to me the cause of her coldness, and I relieved her suspicions. I cannot express to you my delight. She loves me! she loves me! She told me, that the distance which she felt herself compelled to assume was insupportable; so that our difficulties are all harmonized, and you can judge of my happiness."

"Is it possible, my lord!" exclaimed Joseph, his eyes filling with tears. "You will now be always happy, my lord, since the love of the Marchioness was all that you needed, or rather, her want of affection was the cause of your melancholy, as you have frequently told me."

"And to what other person should I have disclosed it? Did not you alone possess my afflicting secret? But let us not speak of sorrow: the day is too beautiful. You perceive, perhaps, that I have shed tears: the reason is, that my happiness has overpowered me—'twas so unexpected. How foolish I am! is it not so?"

"No, no, my lord! you are entitled to weep from happiness, you have wept so much from grief; and do I not also weep? Charming tears! I would not exchange them for ten years of my life. I have but one fear, and that is, that I shall not be able to refrain from throwing myself at the feet of the Marchioness the first time I see her."

"You are as foolish as your master, old idiot: I have also fears for myself."

"What are they?"

"It is that this joy cannot last: I am too happy. What now do I need?"

"Nothing, nothing, my lord."

"That is the very reason I am troubled with forebodings; my happiness is so complete."

"I have other fears, my lord, but I dare not entertain them."

"I understand you; but do not give way to them: the change produced by my happiness is so great, that I am now confident of being saved."

"How so?"

"Has not my physician often assured me, that a violent mental shock had frequently cured this awful malady? Why should not sudden happiness produce the same effect?"

"If you believe this, my lord, it will be so. It is so: you are cured! What a blessed day has dawned upon us! My lady, the Marchioness, is indeed a good angel descended from heaven. I begin myself to fear, that it is too much felicity for one day. But, now I think of it, a little trouble only is needed; and, fortunately, I have it for you."

"What is it?"

"One of your friends has, luckily, at the present moment received a slight sword thrust. It is not a very serious wound, it is true; but it will be sufficient to trouble you, and there will be a small dark spot upon this happy day. It would have been better if the wound was more dangerous; but we must be contented with what we have."

"Hold your peace! To whom do you allude?"

"The Duke de Lucenay."

"Is he wounded?"

"A scratch upon the arm. The Duke called to see my lord, and said he would come this morning and take a cup of tea with you."

"Poor de Lucenay! Why did you not inform me?"

"I was unable to do it last evening, my lord."

After a moment's thought, the Marquis said, "You are right, Joseph: this slight misfortune may appease an envious destiny. But I have an idea of giving this morning a bachelor's breakfast, and invite none but the friends of the Duke de Lucenay, to congratulate him upon the fortunate result of the duel. As it will take him entirely by surprise, he will be very much delighted."

"Excellent, my lord! let us have a glorious holiday. You must make up for all the time you have lost. How many plates, my lord? I wish to give orders to the cook."

"For six persons in the small winter dining-room."

"And the invitations!"

"I will write them. One of the grooms can mount a horse and distribute them immediately; it is yet early, and every one of the guests will be at home. Ring the bell."

Joseph rang the bell.

The Marquis entered his cabinet and wrote the following notes, with no other direction than the name of the invited:

My dear * * *—This is a circular; an impromptu is designed. Lucenay is to breakfast with me this morning, and expects to find me alone: cause him the very agreeable surprise by joining me and a few other friends, whom I have also invited, at 12 precisely.

A. D'HARVILLE.

A servant now entered. "Tell some one to mount a horse, and deliver these notes instantly." Then addressing Joseph, said: "Write the direction Viscount de Saint Remy; 'Lucenay cannot spare him,' said the Marquis to himself; "Mr. de Monville, one of the Duke's travelling companions, Lord Douglass, his invariable partner at whist, the Baron de Sezannes, his friend from youth. Have you written?"

"Yes; my lord."

"Send the notes without losing a moment. Philip, ask Mr. Doublet to come and speak with me."

Philip left the room.

"What is the matter with you?" said the Marquis to Joseph, who was looking at him in amazement.

"I am at a loss what to think of it; I never saw you in such

excellent humor, and although you are generally pale, you have now a fine color; your eyes sparkle."

"With happiness! with happiness! my old Joseph. You must aid me in a plot: you will go and inquire of Mademoiselle Juliette, who is maid of the Marchioness, and has charge of her diamonds, I believe——"

"Yes, my lord; Mademoiselle Juliette has charge of them. I assisted her, a week ago, in cleaning them."

"You will ask her the name and direction of her mistress's jeweller; but let her not say a word about it to the Marchioness."

"I understand you, my lord; you intend a surprise."

"Be in a hurry; for here comes Mr. Doublet."

The steward entered the room the moment that Joseph left it.

"I have the honor to wait for my lord's orders."

"My dear Mr. Doublet, I am about to overwhelm you with amazement," said the Marquis, laughing. "I shall draw from you a cry of distress."

"From me, my lord?"

"Yes, from you."

"I will do all in my power to give my lord satisfaction."

"I am going to spend an enormous amount of money, Mr. Doublet."

"No matter for that: we are able to do it, praised be the Lord!"

"I have, for a long time, been possessed with a project for building. I intend to raise a gallery over the garden, on the right wing of the hôtel. After some hesitation in regard to this extravagance, which, I believe, I never mentioned to you before, I have at length decided; you must inform my architect to-day, that we may settle upon a plan. Well, Mr. Doublet, do you not lament the expenditure?"

"I can affirm to you, my lord, that I do not lament it."

"I design the gallery for fêtes. I wish it to be built as if by enchantment; and you know that enchantment always costs money; and it will be necessary to dispose of fifteen or twenty thousand francs of our capital, to meet the outlay. I wish the work commenced as soon as possible."

"It is perfectly proper, my lord; the pleasure can be enjoyed immediately. I have always said to myself, that my lord needed nothing but a passion for something. That for architecture has an advantage of all others, for buildings remain. As for money, my lord need give himself no uneasiness, we are fortunately able to gratify any of our tastes."

Joseph returned.

"Here, sir, is the address," said he, "of the Marchioness's jeweller. His name is Mr. Baudoin."

"My dear Mr. Doublet, I beg of you to go to this jeweller, and order him to bring a set of diamonds, worth about two thousand louis. Ladies never have too many jewels; particularly at the present day, when dresses are trimmed with them. You will settle the bill with the jeweller."

"Yes, my lord: I have no scruples about this outlay. Diamonds are like buildings, of permanent value; and the surprise will gratify my lady the Marchioness, to say nothing of the pleasure it will afford you. I had the honor of informing you, the other day, that there was not a more fortunate being in the world than the Marquis d'Harville."

"My dear Mr. Doublet, your congratulations are always seasonable."

"That is their only merit, my lord, and that they do possess, for they come from the bottom of my heart. I will go to the jeweller's," said Mr. Doublet, leaving the room.

The moment the Marquis was left alone, he paced the room, with his eyes fixed and meditative. His countenance changed suddenly; it no longer betokened the contentment of mind by which the old valet and the steward had been deceived; but a calm, mournful, determined resolution. After walking for several minutes, he seated himself heavily, as if overcome by the oppressive sorrow of his heart; and resting his elbows upon the table, buried his face in his hands. In an instant, however, he raised his head impulsively, wiped a tear from his inflamed and moistened eyelids, and said, with apparent effort: "Well; courage, courage!"

He now wrote to several people upon subjects of no particular consequence; but, in these letters, made or postponed appointments for a few days yet to come. The Marquis was finishing his correspondence, when Joseph entered in such a cheerful humor, so forgetful of propriety, as to be humming an air.

"You have a very fine voice, Mr. Joseph," said his master, smiling.

"I have no pretensions to voice, my lord; but I sung so loud within my heart that it is heard without."

"You will send these letters to the post-office."

"Yes, my lord; but where do you intend receiving the gentlemen this morning?"

"Here, in my cabinet; for, as they will smoke after breakfast, the odor of the tobacco will not then reach the apartments of the Marchioness."

At this moment a carriage was heard in the courtyard of the hotel.

"It is my lady the Marchioness, who is going out: she ordered her horses very early this morning," said Joseph.

"Hasten, and ask her to see me before she goes."

"Yes, my lord."

Hardly had the servant departed, when the Marquis approached a glass to examine his countenance attentively. "Well, well," said he, in a gloomy voice, "it will do; my cheeks flush, my eyes sparkle, whether with joy or fever it is no matter, provided they are deceived. Now to deck my lip with a smile—there are many sorts of smile—but who can distinguish the false from the true? Who can penetrate this hypocritical mask? Who would venture to say this smile hides despair? That noisy gayety conceals thoughts of death! Who could divine that? No one; fortunately, no one! I am mistaken; love could not be deceived: its instincts would enlighten it. But I hear the footstept of my wife! my wife!! Come: to your part—your part, unlucky buffoon!"

Clemence entered the cabinet of the Marquis. "Good morning, Albert, my good brother," said she, in a tone of thrilling kindness, extending to him her hand; and observing the animated expression of his countenance, added, "What has given you such an expression of joy?"

"At the time you entered, my dear little sister, I was thinking about you; and I was under the influence of an excellent resolution."

"I am not surprised."

"The events of last evening, your admirable generosity, the noble conduct of the Prince, have supplied me with much material for reflection; and I have become a convert to your views. Yes, entirely so. You would not have excused me yesterday, Clemence, for an easy surrender of your love, without a struggle."

"What language! what an auspicious change!" exclaimed the Marchioness. "I was confident, that in addressing your heart, and your reason, you would understand me. I have now no doubts for the future."

"Neither have I, Clemence, I assure you. Since my resolution of last night, the future, which before seemed to me vague and uncertain, has become wonderfully transparent."

"Nothing can be more natural, my dear friend. We now advance toward the same object, supported fraternally by each other's arm; and at the end of our career, we shall find ourselves unchanged. That sentiment will be unalterable. In short, I desire that you should be happy; and in order that you may be so, I have placed it here," said Clemence, smiling, and putting her finger to her forehead; "or rather here," she added, with a charming expression of countenance, lowering her hand to her heart. "It is here that the kindest thoughts shall ever watch over you: and you will learn, my brother, something of the constancy of a devoted heart."

"Dear Clemence!" said the Marquis, with suppressed emotion. After a silence of a moment, he continued in a gay and lively tone: "I sent for you in order to inform you, that I could not take tea with you this morning. I am expecting several friends to breakfast with me. I have started a sort of impromptu, to congratulate poor de Lucenay upon the fortunate result of his duel, although he was but slightly wounded by his adversary!"

The Marchioness blushed, as she thought of the ridiculous cause of this duel; and she was reminded by it, of an error of her own, of which she was heartily ashamed. To avoid unpleasant recollections, she said to her husband:

"By a very singular coincidence, I am myself going to take tea, uninvited, with the Duchess de Lucenay, for I have many things to say to her, respecting my two unknown proteges. From there, I intend to go to Saint Lazare with Madam de Blinval. You are not aware of half of my projects. I am now intriguing to be admitted a member of the society for the protection of young prisoners."

"Your new passion is certainly insatiable," said the Marquis, smiling. He then added, with an emotion which, in spite of his efforts, was very perceptible: "I shall then see you no more —— to day," he hastened to add.

"And you are displeased at my early departure?" said Clemence, quickly, struck with the tone of his voice. "If you desire it, I will postpone my visit to the Duchess."

The Marquis had almost betrayed himself, and he answered, in a most affectionate tone:

"I am as much displeased to see you go out, my dear little sister, as I shall be pleased to see you return. I shall never cure myself of that fault."

"I should be grieved to have you amend it, my friend."

A rap, announcing a visit, was now heard. "Some of your guests are probably coming," said the Marchioness. "I will now leave you. But what do you intend to do this evening? I should be pleased with your company to the Italian Opera—perhaps the music will now be more agreeable to you."

"I shall be at your disposal with the greatest pleasure."

"Will you go out this afternoon, or shall I see you before dinner?"

"I shall not go out: you will find me here."

"When I return, I will come and learn from you the adventures of the bachelor's breakfast."

"Adieu, Clemence."

"Adieu, my friend, until this afternoon. I leave a clear field to you; I wish you all sorts of pleasure. Be very gay."

And cordially pressing her husband's hand, the Marchioness left through one door, a moment before the Duke de Lucenay entered from another.

"She wishes me all sorts of pleasure, she desires me to be very gay; to the word 'adieu!' drawn from the depths of my agonized soul—to that word of final separation, she responded by a 'soon, very soon;' and she leaves me tranquilly, with a smile upon her lips. It certainly does great honor to my histrionic power: I did not know that I was such an excellent actor. But here comes de Lucenay."

CHAPTER VI. ..... BACHELOR'S BREAKFAST.

THE Duke de Lucenay now entered. His wound was so slight that he did not even wear his arm in a sling; his countenance was, as ever, haughty and ironical; the agitation of his limbs incessant; and his disposition to tease invincible. In spite of his awkwardness and solecisms of manner, and the extraordinary length of his nose, the Duke was relieved from vulgarity by a sort of natural dignity, and an air of dauntless impudence.

"You must think me very indifferent to what concerns you, my dear Henry," said the Marquis, giving his hand to the Duke; "but it was only this morning that I heard of your unpleasant adventure."

"Unpleasant! Nonsense, Marquis; I got the worth of my money, as they say. I never laughed so much in my life: the excellent Mr. Robert had such a serious and determined air to wipe off the imputation of having phlegm. You do not know, I presume, that the sole cause of the duel was, my asking him the other night, at the ball of the Embassador of * * *, in presence of your wife and the Countess McGregor, how he got rid of his phlegm. Hence his wrath; for, between us, he did not suffer from that inconvenience. But never mind; he was vexed to hear of it in the presence of pretty women."

"What folly! you never will reform. But who is this Mr. Robert?"

"Upon my word, I know nothing of him. It is the same gentleman I met at the Springs. He was passing before us in the winter-garden of the Embassadress, and I addressed to him this silly joke. He replied to it by giving me, within two days, in a most gallant manner, a thrust with his sword: that is the whole of the adventure. But let us speak no more of this nonsense. I came to ask you for a cup of tea;" and, having thus spoken, the Duke sprawled himself upon the sofa, and inserting his cane between the wall and a picture which hung over his head, commenced shaking and swinging it to and fro, like a pendulum.

"I was waiting for you, my dear Duke, when you arrived. I have prepared a surprise for you."

"Well! what is it?" exclaimed the Duke, giving the picture a more violent motion.

"You will unhook the picture, and let it down upon your head."

"That is true—you have an eagle eye. But what surprise have you prepared? what is it?"

"I have asked several of your friends to meet us at breakfast."

"Indeed, Marquis! Bravo! bravissimo! archibravissimo!" exclaimed the Duke, thumping with his cane the pillows of the sofa; "and who have you asked? Saint Remy? Oh! no, no; he has gone into the country for a few days. What the devil can have sent him into the country in the middle of winter!"

"Are you sure he is not in Paris?"

"Very sure. I wrote to him, to ask his services as my second; but he was absent, and I had to ask Lord Douglas and Sezannes."

"It is fortunate that I invited them to breakfast."

"Bravo! bravo!" said the Duke, twisting and turning upon the sofa, and accompanying his evolutions with hard knocks with his cane. The mystic movements of the Duke were interrupted by the arrival of the Viscount Saint Remy."

"There is no necessity of my inquiring whether the Duke de Lucenay is here: I heard him down stairs," said the Viscount, gayly.

"Hallo! is that you, romantic Sylvian, rustic, ware-wolf?" exclaimed the Duke in astonishment, and rising abruptly. "I thought you had gone into the country?"

"I returned yesterday. I received this morning the invitation of the Marquis, and anticipating a joyful surprise, hastened here," said the Viscount, giving his hand to the Duke and the Marquis.

"I am obliged to you for your promptness, my dear Saint Remy. It is quite natural that the friend of the Duke should hasten to congratulate him upon his safety."

"But what the devil have you been doing in the country in mid-winter? That is what surprises me," said the pertinacious Duke.

"Oh, I went there to wean myself, by degrees, from Paris, since I am so shortly to leave it."

"That's an excellent idea of yours, getting attached to the Gerolstein embassy. You never can be allowed to go there, my wife says, and everybody repeats the same."

"I assure you, that the Duchess as well as 'everybody' is mistaken."

"She told you in my presence, that it was folly."

"I am used to them."

"To elegant and charming follies? I know that you are. I admit, that you are deceiving yourself, by apeing the magnificence of a Sardanapalus; but to go and bury yourself in such a hole as the court of Gerolstein is not a folly, but a stupidity."

"Beware, my dear de Lucenay. If you speak contemptuously of that German court, you will raise a quarrel with the Marquis, who is an intimate friend of the reigning Grand Duke. By the way, his Highness received me with the most extraordinary grace, at the ball of the Embassadress of * * *, where I was presented to him."

"Indeed, my dear Henry, if you knew the Grand Duke as I know him, you would readily perceive why the Viscount should have no repugnance to passing a few months at Gerolstein."

"I believe you, Marquis. I have heard that the Grand Duke is quite an original; but after all, a beau like Saint Remy, the finest flower of the pea-blossom, cannot live anywhere but in Paris. He never would be fully appreciated in any other place but this."

The other guests had just arrived, when Joseph entered, and said a few words in a low tone to his master.

"Gentlemen, you must excuse me," said the Marquis. "The jeweller of my wife has brought me some diamonds to select for her. I wish to surprise her. You know that myself and Lucenay are husbands of the old school."

"By the way, speaking of surprise, my wife gave me one yesterday, and a famous one, also."

"Did she make you a splendid present?"

"She asked me for a hundred thousand francs."

"And, as you are a generous husband, you——"

"Lent her that amount, taking a mortgage on her estate at Arnouville. Good accounts, you know, make good friends; but at all events, to lend one hundred thousand francs at two hours' notice to a friend, is as generous as it is rare. Was it not glorious, Saint Remy? for you are an adept at a loan," said the Duke, laughing, unsuspecting the cutting nature of the thrust.

In spite of his brazen front, the Viscount blushed slightly, but recovered his composure sufficiently to say: "One hundred thousand francs? How can a woman contrive to spend one hundred thousand francs? With a man, it is entirely a different thing."

"Upon my soul I do not know, and what is better, do not care; she probably wishes to pay for some dresses. She is doubtless dunned by some impatient and exacting merchant. It is her own look-out. 'Twould have been exceeding bad taste while making a loan, to ask the borrower what she intended to do with the money!"

"And yet, usurers are frequently curious to know to what purpose their funds are to be applied," said the Viscount, laughing.

"Saint Remy, as you are a man of unimpeachable taste, you must aid me in selecting these jewels which I design for my wife. Your approbation will consecrate my choice. Your decision is final on all questions of style."

The jeweller entered, bringing several cases of diamonds in a leather bag.

"Hallo! Mr. Baudoin, upon my word!" said the Duke.

"At your service, my lord Duke."

"I am sure it is you who are ruining my wife, with your infernal and dazzling temptations," said the Duke.

"My lady Duchess was desirous of having her jewels reset this winter," said the jeweller, with a slight embarrassment; "and just before I came here I took them to the Duchess."

The Viscount Saint Remy was well aware, that the Duchess, in order to come to his aid, had been obliged to change her diamonds for false stones; and as he was rather annoyed by the turn the conversation was taking, he remarked boldly:

"How curious and inquisitive husbands are becoming! I would not answer him, Mr. Baudoin."

"Curious! you are greatly mistaken. My wife must pay her own expenses; she is richer than I am."

During the conversation, Mr. Baudoin had displayed upon the table several splendid necklaces of diamonds and rubies.

"What magnificent stones, and how exquisitely cut!" said Lord Douglass.

"Alas! sir," said the jeweller, "I employed upon this work, one of the best lapidaries in Paris; but he has suddenly become deranged, and I shall be unable to find his equal. My brokeress told me that poverty was probably the cause of his delirium."

"Poverty! and do you confide diamonds to people so wretchedly destitute?"

"Certainly, sir; and no one ever heard of a lapidary that was a thief, although the trade is a very laborious one, and exceedingly unprofitable."

"How much is this necklace worth?" asked the Marquis.

"My lord Marquis will observe that all the stones are of the purest water, and uniformly cut."

"This manifesto threatens a very serious attack upon your purse," said the Viscount, laughing. "You may expect, my dear d'Harville, an exorbitant demand."

"I do not wish to oblige my lord the Marquis, to chaffer with me; the very lowest price is forty-two thousand francs."

"Gentlemen, let us yield our silent admiration to the Marquis; a surprise that costs forty-two thousand francs! but I beg of you not to make it public, 't would be an odious precedent."

"Laugh as much as you please, gentlemen," said the Marquis, gayly; "I am fond of my wife, and far from wishing to conceal it, I am desirous of boasting of it."

"We are perfectly convinced of it," said the Viscount; "a present like this speaks louder than all the protestations in the world."

"I will select this necklace, if this black enamel setting appears to you in good taste, Saint Remy?"

"It adds much to the brilliancy of the stones; I think the arrangement beautiful."

"I decide upon this necklace: you will settle with my steward, Mr. Doublet," said the Marquis to the jeweller.

"Mr. Doublet has already informed me, my lord," said Mr. Baudoin, returning the different sets of diamonds which he had displayed with the most perfect confidence into his bag, without counting the stones which the Viscount de Saint Remy had examined and handled with marked curiosity, during the interview.

The Marquis d'Harville, on giving the necklace into Joseph's hands, said to him in a low tone:

"Let Mademoiselle Juliette adroitly place these diamonds among the other jewelry of her mistress, in such a manner that her suspicions may not be awakened, in order that the surprise may be more complete."

At this moment, the principal servant announced that breakfast was ready, and the guests of the Marquis passed into the dining-room, and seated themselves at the table.

"Do you know, my dear Marquis," said the Duke, "that this house is one of the most elegant and best arranged in Paris?"

"It is convenient enough," said the Marquis, "but it needs more room; I think of adding to it a gallery over the garden. The Marchioness intends to give some grand entertainments, and our three saloons are not large enough; besides, there is nothing so inconvenient, as to be exiled by a fête from some apartment which you habitually occupy."

"I am of the same opinion, Marquis," said the Viscount. "Nothing is so vulgar as these forced retreats, which are ordered under the authority of some ball or concert. To give an entertainment in elegant style, without incommoding yourself, one should devote exclusively to it, a suite of apartments; and moreover, a large and splendid hall designed for a ball, should have decorations different from an ordinary parlor; the same contrast should exist between the style of the two apartments, as there is between monumental fresco and canvas painting."

"He is right: what a calamity it is, that Saint Remy has not an income of twelve or fifteen hundred thousand francs? how he would astonish mankind by his magnificent and splendid designs."

"Since we are blessed with a representative government," said the Duke, "should not the country vote one million a year to Saint Remy, and charge him with the task of exhibiting in Paris, the taste and elegance of the French nation; and thus France would become the arbiter of elegance and the fine arts to Europe and the world?"

"It is carried," said the company, in chorus.

"And the million should be raised annually by a tax upon those contemptible misers, who having immense estates, should be tried and convicted of living like stingy dogs," added the Duke.

"And thus sentenced to defray the expense of that magnificence, which it is their duty to display," added the Marquis.

"The functions of high priest, or rather grand-master of elegance, devolving on Saint Remy, would also have a tendency to elevate the standard of general taste."

"He would himself be a model which every one would aspire to resemble."

"That is plain."

"And this effort to imitate him would render the taste purer."

"At the era of the Renaissance, taste became universally excellent, because it was modelled upon the exquisite elegance of the aristocrats of that period."

"By the grave turn which the conversation has taken, I see that it will be necessary to present a petition to the Chamber to institute an office of Grand Master of French Elegance."

"And as the Deputies are desirous of being regarded as supreme upon all æsthetical questions, I presume the bill would be carried by acclamation."

"While waiting for a decision which will legalize the authority which Saint Remy now exercises in fact, I will consult your opinions respecting the gallery which I am proposing to erect."

"My feeble light is at your disposal, d'Harville."

"And when shall the splendid temple be consecrated?"

"Next year, I presume; for I shall order the work to be commenced immediately."

"You seem to be perfectly possessed with projects."

"I have many others. I design a complete metamorphosis of Val-Richer."

"Your estate in Burgundy?"

"Yes. I will make it an admirable retreat, if God allows me to live long enough."

"Poor old man!"

"But have you not extended your property in Burgundy recently, by the purchase of another farm?"

"Yes: 't was a very good speculation, which I made under the advice of my notary."

"Who is the rare and precious man, who gives you such excellent advice?"

"Mr. Jacques Ferrand."

A slight agitation traced its lines on the forehead of the Viscount de Saint Remy, at the mention of that name.

"Is he really the honest man he is represented to be?" asked the Viscount, negligently, of the Marquis d'Harville, who now called to mind the insinuations of Rodolphe.

"What a question!" said the Duke. "The probity of Jacques Ferrand is fairly antique."

"He is as much respected as he is respectable."

"Very pious withal; but that spoils nothing."

"His excessive avarice is a good security for his clients."

"He is one of those notaries of the old school, who ask you for what you mistake them, when you venture to speak of a receipt for money intrusted to their hands."

"For that reason alone, I would confide all my property to his hands."

"But where the devil did you pick up your doubts concerning this worthy man, Saint Remy?"

"I am only the echo of vague reports: I have no reason for denying the integrity of this phœnix. But to return to your projects, d'Harville: what do you intend to build at Val-Richer? they say that the château is admirable."

"You shall be consulted, I assure you, my dear Saint Remy, and sooner perhaps than you imagine; for I anticipate much pleasure from my improvements there. There seems to me nothing more agreeable, than to have in your mind a series of projects which will fill up the vacuity of years to come: now this plan, next year that, the year after the other. This delightful occupation of mind, united with a charming wife whom you adore, and who sympathizes with all your designs, and I cannot conceive why life should not pass pleasantly enough."

"Just the thing: a perfect paradise upon earth!"

"Now, gentlemen," said the Marquis, "if you wish to smoke a cigar, you will find some of excellent flavor in my cabinet."

The guests arose from the table, and retired to the cabinet of the Marquis. The door of his sleeping apartment was open; the only ornaments of which, as we have before said, were two sets of beautiful arms. The Duke having lighted his cigar, followed the Marquis into his chamber.

"You know I was always very fond of arms," said the Marquis to him.

"Indeed, you have some magnificent guns, both of French and English manufacture. I do not know which to prefer. Douglass, come and see if these guns are not equal to first-rate Mantons."

Lord Douglass, Saint Remy, and the two other guests entered the chamber to examine the arms.

The Marquis took up a duelling pistol, and cocking it, said in a laughing manner: "Here, gentlemen, is the universal panacea for spleen, ennui, or any other evil which flesh is heir to;" and he placed the weapon to his lips in a jesting manner.

"As for me," said Saint Remy, "I prefer some other specific. This is good enough in desperate cases."

"Yes; and there is no other so quick and efficacious: whiff! and it is all over. 'Tis a wonderful solace!"

"Be careful, d'Harville; these pleasantries are not always safe; an explosion may occur accidentally," said the Duke, as he saw the Marquis place the pistol to his lips.

"Do you think, my dear fellow, I should play with it in this manner if it was loaded?"

"Certainly not; but it is always best to be on the safe side."

"This is the way to manage the affair, gentlemen: you delicately insert the barrel between your teeth, and then——"

"There is no end to your folly, when you once commence, d'Harville," said the Duke, shrugging his shoulders.

"One places his finger on the trigger," continued the Marquis.

"What a child!"

"A slight movement of a muscle, and one is sent into the regions of the dead." At these words the pistol was discharged. The Marquis d'Harville blew out his brains!

The power of language is feeble to portray the affright and horror of the astonished guests. The next day the following paragraph could be read in the public prints:

"Yesterday, a fatal and most sudden casualty, created a great sensation in the faubourg Saint Germain. One of those imprudent acts, which yearly put an end to so many lives, caused this lamentable event. The facts below, we have gathered from the best sources, and the public may rely upon their authenticity. The Marquis d'Harville, a proprieter of an immense fortune, of about twenty-six years of age, and distinguished for the elevation of his character and the excellence of his heart, having been but a few years married to a wife he adored, had invited some of his friends to breakfast; on leaving the table, the guests passed into the sleeping apartment of the Marquis d'Harville, in which room there were several valuable arms. The Marquis, in a joke, took one of the pistols, placed it to his lips, and was so perfectly confident it was not loaded, that he even pulled the trigger; the pistol was discharged and the unfortunate young man fell dead, his head most shockingly shattered. Imagine the consternation of the Marquis d'Harville's friends, to whom a few moments before, full of life, happiness, and bright prospects, he had been imparting some of his projects for the future. In short, as if everything combined to render this casualty one of the most painful it was ever our duty to record, the very morning of this fatal event, the Marquis, wishing to take his wife by surprise, had purchased a necklace of great value to present to her. At a time when life had never appeared more brilliant and promising, he fell, a victim to this awful accident.

"It is useless to waste words in reflections upon such a mournful calamity. We can only remain in silent wonder at the inscrutable decrees of Providence."

We quote from the paper, in order to show that the public at large attributed the death of Clemence's husband to a fatal casualty resulting from his imprudence. The Marquis carried with him to the grave, the secret of his voluntary death. Yes; voluntary, for it was premeditated with as much intrepidity as magnanimity; so that even his wife might not suspect the cause of his self-murder. The projects which the Marquis had developed to his friends and steward, the happiness which he had confided to his valet, the surprise which he had prepared for his wife, were all false lures, held out to public credulity. Who could suppose that a man whose mind was so occupied with future projects, so solicitous to please his wife, could think of destroying himself? No other cause but an accidental one, could be assigned for his death.

His fatal resolution had been dictated by hopeless despair. The generous and frank forgiveness which his wife had granted for the great wrong which he had inflicted upon her, her resolve to redeem her past indifference by devoting her life to alleviating his sufferings, had awakened in the heart of her husband the most distressing remorse. Her mournful resignation to a life without love, devoted to the relief of a man afflicted with an incurable disease; her solemn asseveration that she could never overcome her repugnance to him, had inspired the Marquis with the tenderest compassion for his wife, the most terrible disgust for himself. In the exasperation of his pain he said to himself, "I love, and can only love one woman in the world, and that woman is my wife; and her present disposition would augment my passion for her, if that were possible. She never can love me, she has the best right to despise and hate me; for by an infamous deceit, I have chained her to my own deplorable existence. What remains for me to do, but to deliver her from the odious bonds which cruelty and selfishness have imposed? My death alone can sever those ties. I must therefore die." These were the motives which led the Marquis to that awful sacrifice.

If the defect, to which we have alluded, did not exist in the law; if a divorce could have been obtained, would the unfortunate man have laid violent hands upon himself? No! for he then could have partially remedied the grievous wrong which he had committed; could have restored his wife to freedom, and permitted her to find, in another marriage, the happiness which was destroyed in this. The immutable imperfections of the law, therefore, renders certain errors remediless, or remediable only as the one we have contemplated by a new crime.

CHAPTER VII ..... SAINT LAZARE.

We think that we should inform the most fastidious of our readers, that the prison of Saint Lazare, particularly devoted to female outcasts and thieves of the same sex, is daily visited by ladies, whose benevolent character and social position, command universal respect. Those who are accustomed to all the splendors of affluence—those who by their beauty and accomplishments are entitled to a place in the most distinguished circles, pass long hours with the prisoners of Saint Lazare, watching their degraded souls for the first budding of rectitude, the first aspiration after truth, the first pang of remorse over their past crimes; to stimulate their upward tendency, to guide and direct their repentance, and by the eloquence with which they enforce lessons upon Duty, Honor and Virtue, to rescue from the abyss in which they are plunged, some at least of these abandoned, despised and forsaken creatures. These courageous matrons, habituated to all the refinements of the most select and elevated society, pressing their lips upon the brows of their own daughter's, innocent as angels in heaven, forsake the sphere to which they are native, and plunge into the dark prisons to brave the coarseness, indecency, profanity, of these thieves and profligates. Faithful to their mission of exalted beneficence, they do not shrink from exposing themselves to this infectious atmosphere, to place their hands upon these degraded hearts, to discover if some slight and feeble beating encourages the hope of final salvation, and struggle to tear the contaminated soul from almost inevitable perdition. The modest and shrinking readers to whom we address ourselves, can quiet their fears and their susceptibility, by the assurance that they will see and hear nothing but what is daily presented to these most virtuous and exemplary missionaries. Without presuming to draw a parallel between their efforts and our own, we are somewhat sustained in our difficult and painful undertaking, by the conviction of having awakened some noble sympathy for undeserved misfortune; for sincere repentance, for artless honesty; and having inspired disgust, horror, and salutary fear, for all that is positively vicious and impure: we have not shrunk from presenting pictures, faithful though hideous, of human nature as it exists, under the conviction that their moral truth will have, like the fire, sufficient power to purify anything that may be regarded as offensive in these delineations of depravity. Our words have too little weight, and our opinions too little authority, for us to aspire to the functions of a moral teacher. We attempt only to call the attention of earnest and thoughtful minds to great social evils, the existence of which may be deplored, but cannot be denied. Many persons, fortunate in the good things of this world, and of valetudinarian delicacy of mind, shocked at this exposure of evils which exist, have raised the cry that these delineations are exaggerated, improbable and unnatural, in order

that too strong claims for compassion might not be presented to their sensitive souls.

The result is a very natural one. The selfish man, who is rich and well fed, desires before everything else in the world, quiet and undisturbed digestion; the presence of the poor, shivering with cold and hunger, destroys the tranquillity essential to this process; he prefers to enjoy his wealth and good dinners, with eyes which are half-closed by repletion, dwelling upon the voluptuous visions of the ballet or the opera.

We are happy, however, that all of the wealthy and elevated classes are not gifted with such sublimated delicacy; many of those, fortunate in the possession of riches, have expressed their gratitude to us, for disclosing new channels in which their charity might flow, and we have been powerfully sustained and comforted by the approbation of such minds.

We readily admit, that the present work is a bad book in point of art, but contend that it is not a bad book as regards its morality. If, in its ephemeral career, it shall accomplish any of the objects to which we have just alluded, we shall feel proud and highly honored in being its author. What more glorious reward can we reap than the benedictions of some poor family, indebted for some degree of comfort and happiness, to the views which we have presented to the public?

We have made these preliminary observations, to quiet the scruples of the fastidious reader. We will now introduce him into Saint Lazare, an immense building, with a gloomy and imposing exterior, situated in the rue faubourg Saint Denis.

In ignorance of the terrible drama which was in the progress of development in her own mansion, the Marchioness d'Harville had gone to this prison, after having obtained some information from the Duchess de Lucenay, concerning the two unfortunate females whom the cupidity of Jacques Ferrand had plunged into absolute want. As Madam de Blinval, one of the patronesses of the society for the melioration of young prisoners, was unable to accompany Clemence, she had gone to Saint Lazare alone. She was received politely by the director and several lady inspectors, designated by a black dress and a blue ribbon, and silver medal which they wore. One of these ladies, of advanced age and of a grave and prepossessing countenance, remained alone with the Marchioness, in a small parlor adjoining the office.

It is impossible to imagine all the devotion, intelligence, compassion, and sagacity, unknown to the world, which exist among those reputable females who devote their lives to the humble and obscure task of acting as overseers of prisoners. They must be by turns indulgent and firm, mild and severe, but always just and impartial. By constant intercourse with those committed to their management, they succeed, after long practice and experience, in obtaining such a perfect knowledge of the physiognomy of these females, that they can form an opinion of their character at a glance, and are able to classify them according to their degree of depravity.

Madam Armand, the matron left alone with the Marchioness, possessed to a peculiar degree this remarkable insight; and her judgments upon all questions of character were relied upon with great confidence in the establishment.

Madam Armand said to Clemence: "Since my lady the Marchioness has desired me to point out those of our inmates who, by their improvement or sincere repentance, are entitled to her interest, I can recommend to her an unfortunate girl whom I believe more unhappy than culpable. You may rely upon my assurance, that it is not too late to save this young child, who cannot be more than sixteen or seventeen years of age."

"And what has she done to deserve imprisonment?"

"She was arrested upon the Champs Elysees, in the evening; for it is forbidden under severe penalties, to females of her character, to resort either by day or night to certain public places; and as the Champs Elysees is one of the prohibited promenades, she was arrested."

"And does she appear to you worthy of commiseration?"

"I have never seen features more artless, or more beautiful. Imagine, my lady Marchioness, the face of the Virgin. What gave to her still more modest appearance was, that when she was arrested, she was dressed like a peasant girl in the environs of Paris."

"Is she a country girl?"

"No, my lady. The inspectors have identified her as one who lived in a depraved house in the Cité, from which she has now been absent for two or three months; but as she did not request to have her name erased from the registry of the police, she remained subject to the control of the authorities, who sent her here."

"But perhaps she left Paris for the purpose of reinstating herself."

"That is my own opinion, madam, and was the cause of my becoming immediately interested in her. I have questioned her about the past: I asked her if she came from the country, with the hope that she had formed the determination to emancipate herself."

"What did she reply?"

"Lifting to my face her large blue, melancholy eyes, which were filled with tears, she said, in an accent of angelic sweetness, 'I thank you, madam, for your kindness, but I cannot disclose to you anything of my past history. I have been arrested for doing what was wrong: I do not complain.' 'But whence came you? Where have you been since you left the Cité? If you retired to the country with the intention of leading a different life, inform me of it: give me proof, and I will write to the Prefect to obtain your liberty; your name shall be erased from the register, and your good resolutions encouraged.' 'I beg of you, madam, to ask me no questions, for I cannot answer them.' 'But when you leave this place, do you intend to return to that awful house?' 'Never!' she answered. 'What do you then intend to do?' 'God only knows,' she said, suffering her head to fall upon her breast."

"Her conduct is very singular. How does she express herself?"

"In excellent language. Her deportment is respectful, timid and without vulgarity. I will say more: in spite of the extreme mildness of her voice and appearance, there is occasionally in her accent and her attitude, a kind of melancholy pride which surprises me. If these suspicions did not rest upon her fame, I should say this pride betrayed a soul which was conscious of its own elevation."

CHAPTER VIII..... MONT SAINT JEAN.

THE clock of Saint Lazare was striking two. To the cold which had prevailed for a few days, a mild and spring-like day had succeeded. The rays of the sun were reflected from a large stone fountain situated in the middle of the courtyard. The plot was planted by trees, and inclosed with walls, which were pierced by numerous grated windows. Wooden benches were placed here and there in this paved inclosure—the ordinary promenade of the inmates of the prison. The ringing of the bell announced that the hour of recreation had arrived, and the prisoners rushed tumultuously into the courtyard, through a grated door which was opened to them. The prisoners were uniformly dressed in a black cap, long gowns, of a blue woollen, fastened round the waist by a belt with an iron buckle. There were two hundred of these outcasts confined in this prison for violations of those particular rules and police regulations, which govern them to the exclusion of the common law. At the first sight, there was nothing very marked in their countenance, but upon a more attentive observation, the inefaceable lines of vice and degradation could be distinctly traced. At the sight of this vast assemblage of lost creatures, the mind of the beholder could not but revert, with melancholy interest, to the period when some of them, at least, were virtuous and pure. We say some, for unfortunately the great majority of these outcasts were vitiated, not only from their youth, but from their infancy—even from their birth. The question is asked, with painful anxiety, what are the fatal causes of this wholesale ruin of body and soul? A thousand causes combine in producing this lamentable effect. It is less frequently the result of vicious inclination, than of a bad example, neglected education, and abandonment in childhood; but the grand parent cause of all this wretchedness and infamy, is poverty.

When the prisoners rushed, hallooing and screaming, into the yard, it was easy to perceive that it was not the joy of release from employment that rendered them so boisterous. After the first sally from the gate which led into the yard, the crowd separated, and formed a circle around a deformed creature whom they loaded with hisses and groans.

This being was a small woman of thirty-six or forty years of age, short, thick and shapeless, with her neck sunk between her shoulders. The cap had been torn from her head, and her long and tangled locks of sandy hair fell over her low and beast-like forehead. She wore the uniform of blue, and carried under her right arm, a bundle, wrapped in an old and torn handkerchief. She attempted with her left arm to parry the blows which were aimed at her.

Nothing could be more grotesque and pitiable than the countenance of the woman; it was a face ridiculous, and at the same time, hideous; it projected more like a snout, than a visage; wrinkled, tanned, and dirty, pierced with two nostrils; and two small, squinting and blood-shot eyes, danced about in supplication or in anger. But her prayers, and her threats, only served

to redouble the laughter of her persecutors. This woman was the sport and derision of the prisoners, and yet she offered the strongest title to their forbearance which a female can present. But her ugliness, her imbecility, and the prevalent habit, of regarding her as a victim devoted to their amusement, rendered her tormentors implacable, in spite of their ordinary respect for maternity.

Among the most relentless enemies of Mont Saint Jean, (for such was the victim's name,) was a girl called Louve.* She was a tall, masculine girl, of twenty; active, resolute, with some regularity of features; with coarse black hair, tinged with red; a florid complexion; a bluish down on her thick lip; and dark, thick, rough eyebrows, that met over her wild eyes. An expression that was violent, fierce, and almost beastly, arising from the habitual exposure of her white and scattered teeth, had secured for her the surname of Louve.

There was, notwithstanding these revolting lineaments, more of boldness and impudence than of cruelty in her face, and one could understand that she was rather indebted to her degradation to the force of circumstances, than to depravity of disposition; and might have been included in that class which Madam Armand had mentioned to the Marchioness, as being susceptible of reformation.

"What have I done to you?" exclaimed Mont Saint Jean, struggling in the midst of her persecutors. "Why do you torment me so?"

"Because it amuses us."

"Because you are good for nothing else than to be teased."

"It's what you were made for."

"Look in the glass and you won't complain."

"You know well enough, that I only complain when I can't bear it any longer."

"Well, well: we'll let you alone if you'll only tell us why you are called Mont Saint Jean."

"Yes, yes: tell us that."

"I've told you a hundred times; it's the name of a former sweetheart of mine, an old soldier, who was wounded at the battle of Mont Saint Jean, and I have stuck to his name. Ain't you satisfied? Why do you make me sing over the same song?"

"He must have been a pretty chap if he looked like you."

"I guess he belonged to the Invalides."

"I know that I am ugly, a real monster; there is no denying it. Insult me, and laugh at me as much as you please, but don't beat me: that's all I ask."

"What have you there, in that old ragged handkerchief?" asked Louve.

"Yes, yes: what have you got there?"

"Show us your treasures."

"Let us see them, let us see them."

"Oh no! I beg of you!" said the poor wretch, clinging to the bundle with all her strength.

"Let us have hold of it."

"Twitch it away from her, Louve."

"How cruel you are; go off and leave me alone."

"Tell us then, what's in your bundle?"

"Well, then—I am trying to make up some old rags that nobody wants, and which I have picked up, into baby's clothes."

"The clothes of a young Mont Saint Jean must be funny."

"Out with them."

"Slip, cap, linen and all; let's see them."

"She must have taken the measure of the overseer's pup."

"Here goes; take the duds," exclaimed Louve, tearing the bundle from Mont Saint Jean's hands.

The old handkerchief was torn to pieces in the struggle, and great variety of all remnants of all sizes, shapes, colors and texture, half-sewed together, flew about the yard, and were trampled upon by the prisoners, amid jeers and shouts of laughter.

"What trash!"

"She must have been plundering some rag-gatherer's basket."

"Here's your fine old clothes!"

"What a job it must be to sew all these tags together."

"There will be more thread than cloth when 'tis done."

"'Twill be a piece of embroidery."

"Pick up your wardrobe, Mont Saint Jean."

"What cruelty! what cruelty!" exclaimed the poor creature, running after the rags, which she tried to collect in spite of the pushes and jerks which they gave her. "I never have hurt any one; I offered all sorts of favors, if you would only let me alone; I have given away half of my ration, when I have been almost famished: but it is of no use. What can I do for peace? have you no pity upon a poor wretch in my situation? you are more savage than beasts; I had to gather these little remnants because I had no money to buy cloth to make up into clothes. What harm does it do to pick up the rags which people have thrown away?" But suddenly, Mont Saint Jean exclaimed, with an accent of hope: "Oh! since you have come, Goualeuse, I shall be safe. Speak in my behalf; they will listen to you, for they love you as much as they hate me." Goualeuse arriving, the last of the prisoners now entered the inclosure.

* Louve—female wolf.

CHAPTER IX. ..... GOUALEUSE AND LOUISE.

Before proceeding with the narration of this revolting scene, before introducing the angel-like face of Fleur de Marie into this frightful picture, we must return to the conversation of the Marchioness d'Harville and Madam Armand, which had been for a moment interrupted. At the sound of the bell, the matron had hastened to one of the doors which opened into the yard, in order to suppress, by her presence, any outbreak of violence which frequently resulted from this temporary relaxation from the discipline of labor. Madam Armand had observed the cruel persecutions of which Mont Saint Jean was the victim, and was about hastening to her rescue when Fleur de Marie arrived.

"She is safe," said the matron to herself; and she returned to the parlor in which the Marchioness was seated, who had been so much interested in the tale to which she had listened, that she was already inspired with hope; and anticipating the task of succor and consolation, "how true," thought she, "are the words of the Prince: 'There is nothing more amusing than the works of benevolence.'"

"What you have just told me," said the Marchioness, without giving her companion time to apologize for her absence; "what you have just told me, is exceedingly novel; and this young girl, whose beauty, manners, and language, form such a strange contrast with her past degradation, and her present situation, what relation does she sustain to the other prisoners? If she is endowed with the elevation of soul which you attribute to her, she must suffer wretchedly from associating with such degraded companions."

"Even to me, who am an observer from profession and habit, everything about this young girl is astonishing. She has not been here three days, and has already acquired a kind of influence over the prisoners."

"In so short a time?"

"They seem to feel for her not only an affection but respect."

"Are these wretches capable of such emotions?"

"They often have an instinctive perception of the noble qualities of others, though they often hate those persons whose superiority they are forced to admit."

"And do they not hate this poor young girl?"

"Very far from it. She was known to none of them before she came here, and they were all struck with her beauty. Her features, of rare loveliness, are veiled, if I may so express myself, with a touching paleness; and her melancholy, and sweet expression, inspired them all with more of sympathy than jealousy. Besides, she is quiet and pensive; which is another anomaly among creatures of this class, who usually endeavor to drown the voice of conscience, by noisy laughter and amusement. And, although quiet and retired, she has shown herself kind and compassionate, which has prevented them from accusing her of being selfish and unfeeling. But this is not all; there was sent here about a month since, an unmanageable girl, who from her violence and audacity has obtained the surname of Louve. She is about twenty years of age; tall and masculine, of regular but savage features, whom we are often obliged to confine in a dungeon, in order to overcome her violence. Day before yesterday she left the cell, enraged at the punishment which had been inflicted upon her. It was at meal-time, and the poor girl to whom I have alluded, being unable to eat, said: 'I have no appetite; who wishes my bread?' 'I,' exclaimed Louve. 'I,' said another creature, who is called Mont Saint Jean—the butt, and at times, in spite of us, the victim of Louve, although she has strong claims upon the pity of her companions. The young girl gave her bread to the last applicant, to the great disappointment and even rage of Louve. 'I asked you first,' exclaimed she, in a furious tone. 'That is true,' said she; 'but as this poor girl is in such a situation, she has more need of it than you have.' Louve, however, tore the bread from the hands of Mont Saint Jean, and began to vociferate, and brandish her knife. As she is held in great dread, no one ventured to take the part of poor Goualeuse, although all the prisoners justified her in their own minds."

"What did you call her name, madam?"

"Goualeuse—that is the name, or rather surname, under which this young girl has been confined here, who I hope will

soon become your protegé. They have nearly all of them some designation of a similar character."

"The name is a singular one."

"It means, in their dialect, the songstress; for the young girl is said to possess a very sweet voice; and I readily believe it, for there is a great deal of melody in her ordinary conversation."

"And how did she escape from the frightful Louve?"

"The coolness of Goualeuse, rendered her adversary still more furious, and she ran to her with insults upon her tongue, and her knife brandished on high. The prisoners all uttered an exclamation of fear. Goualeuse alone looked unmoved upon the formidable creature, and said to her in a most sweet and touching voice: "Kill me if you will; but let me suffer as little as possible." The words, I am told, were uttered with a tone of such thrilling tenderness, that tears were brought into the eyes of all."

"I can readily believe it," said the Marchioness, affected herself.

"The worst natures," continued Madam Armand, "have some germ of goodness in them. Upon hearing these words of patient resignation, Louve was very powerfully moved, as she afterward confessed; and throwing down her knife, and trampling it under her feet, exclaimed: 'I was wrong to threaten you, Goualeuse, for I am stronger than you. You were not afraid of the knife; you are courageous, and I like courageous people; and if any one attempts to injure you, I will defend you.'"

"What a strange character!"

"The submission of Louve increased the influence of Goualeuse; and until this time, a thing unprecedented, not one of her companions speak familiarly to her; they offer to render her all the small services of which their situation admits. I inquired of some of the inmates of the dormitory in which she sleeps, 'What was the cause of the deference shown to her!' They professed themselves unable to explain, and only replied, 'That it was evident, she was a different being from what they were.' 'But who told you that she was?' 'No one told us; it is a thing that can be seen.' 'But how did you see it?' 'By a thousand signs. In the first place: last night, before going to bed, she knelt down and said her prayers. To pray in that manner, Louve said, 'A person *must have a right to pray.*'"

"What a strange remark!"

"These miserable beings have no sense of religion, and yet they never utter here an impious or profane word. You will see in all of the halls, images of the Virgin, surrounded with ornaments and offerings, which the inmates of the prison have suspended. Every Sunday, a large number of candles are burnt as offerings. Those who attend chapel, behave with propriety, and holy places generally seem to command their respect or their fear. But to return to Goualeuse. 'It is plain she is not like us,' said her companions, 'from her mild expression, her melancholy, and the language which she uses.' 'It is plain she is not one of us,' said Louve, in a rough tone; 'for this morning, in the dormitory, we were ashamed to dress ourselves in her presence.'"

"What a strange and anomalous delicacy in the midst of so much degradation."

"They shrink not from what female modesty usually dreads; they have also no shame in the presence of each other; but they are much abashed to be seen with their toilet incomplete by one of us, or by any charitable visitor like yourself, my lady. Thus the instinct implanted by nature, in the female bosom, reveals itself in these degraded creatures, in the presence of the only beings they can respect."

"It is consoling, at least, to find some natural feeling which overmasters depravity."

"It is, indeed. These creatures are also susceptible of attachment and devotion, which, if it were properly directed, could not but be creditable to human nature. There is another thing sacred with them, who have respect or fear for so few obligations, human or divine. It is maternity; they are proud of it, delighted with it. There are in no class, more devoted mothers; they will sacrifice everything, to keep their children near them; encounter almost any self-denial, in order to rear them; for they say that these little beings are the only ones that do not despise them."

"They seem to be profoundly conscious of their own disgrace."

"No one can despise them as much as they despise themselves. In the eyes of many of them who have sincerely repented, the original stain remains indelible in their own estimation, even when they find themselves in a situation of respectability. The idea of their past degradation is so permanent and incurable with others, that it frequently deranges their intellects. I should not be surprised if the settled melancholy of Goualeuse proceeded from such a remorse."

"What a torture for her, this consciousness of a shame which cannot be effaced, must be!"

"Fortunately, madam, for the honor of our nature, such remorse is more common than is generally supposed. Avenging conscience never entirely sleeps, or rather, by a strange law, the soul watches while the body slumbers—an observation which I had occasion to make last night, in regard to our protege. Frequently, when these wretched females are asleep, I visit their dormitories. You cannot imagine how the expression of their countenance varies in their sleep. Many of them whom I have observed during the day as bold, daring and hardened, appear entirely changed when sleep strips all disguise from their features, all affectation of stoicism; for vice has its pride. What distressing revelation have their slumbers often made! What deep-drawn sighs, involuntary shudders, when some dream has presented, in vivid colors, the awful reality to their mind! I spoke to you a moment since, of this wild and ungovernable Louve. About two weeks since, she insulted me in the presence of all the prisoners: I remained unmoved at her wrath, and shrugged my shoulders with indifference. My phlegm exasperated her the more, and she used I know not what offensive epithet respecting my mother, whom she had frequently seen visit me."

"What infamy!"

"However contemptible the attack, it wounded my feelings. Louve perceived it, and seemed to enjoy her triumph. That night I visited the dormitory: I approached the couch of Louve, who was to be confined in the cell the next day. I was astonished; I can almost say, moved, by the mildness of her expression, compared with the savage insolence which was habitual to her face. Her features indicated supplication, grief, repentance; her lips were partly open, her breast heaved, and, what would have seemed to me incredible, two large tears were flowing from the eyes of that girl hardened in iniquity. I watched her for several moments in silence, and I heard her lips pronounce the words, 'Pardon! pardon! her mother!' I listened still more attentively, and heard her mutter, almost inaudibly, my name."

"She was touched with remorse for having insulted your mother?"

"I believed so, and was more lenient to her on that account. She wished, doubtless, in presence of her companions, out of a despicable vanity, to exaggerate her natural insolence; but a good instinct during her sleep, moved her to repentance."

"Did she evince any sorrow the next day?"

"Not the least: she showed herself as wild, careless and passionate, as ever. I assure you, however, that nothing so much inclines me to compassion, as these observations which I make upon the prisoners during their sleep. It may be a delusion, but I frequently think, that their better nature is restored to these miserable females during their sleep; that, although they may retain all their faults, their good impulses become more active, and their real character is no longer disguised by the detestable bravado of vice. And I had been induced to believe, that these creatures are usually less perverse than they appear to be; and I have, from this conviction, succeeded in reforming those, of whom otherwise I should have despaired."

The Marchioness d'Harville, could not but be surprised at the evidence which the obscure matron of this prison afforded, of a rational understanding, comprehensive and practical views, and great kindness of heart.

"Indeed, madam, you seem to discharge your unpleasant functions with such a temper, that your office must have become to you a source of great interest and gratification. What an opportunity you have for curious observation and profound speculation upon human nature; but above all, what good you have it in your power to accomplish."

"The task of reform is a very difficult one; these females remain here but a very short time; it is therefore impossible to carry out any plan of reformation. You are obliged to content yourself with sowing, under the hope that in good time others will reap."

"You must be gifted, madam, with great courage and benevolence, not to shrink before the trials of a task which yields such rich returns."

"The consciousness of discharging my duty, sustains me. We are also, sometimes rewarded by an unexpected discovery; we occasionally discern light in a heart which we regarded as entirely obscure."

"Women of your character must be very rare."

"No, no: the duties which I perform, many others discharge with much greater success and intelligence. The matron of the other department of Saint Lazare, designed for the detention of prisoners accused of crimes, would interest you much more than

I can, by the facts which she is able to communicate. She informed me quite recently, of the arrival of a young woman charged with infanticide. I have never heard of circumstances more distressing and peculiar, than those which attend her case. The father of the unfortunate woman is an honest lapidary, who has been driven to madness by his grief at hearing of the shame of his daughter. Nothing could be conceived more frightful than the misery of the whole family; they lodged in a wretched garret in rue du Temple."

"Rue du Temple!" exclaimed the Marchioness; "what was the name of the artisan?"

"Morel; and his daughter's name is Louise Morel."

"It is the same."

"She was in the employment of Jacques Ferrand, a notary."

"This poor family have been recommended to me," said Clemence, blushing; "but I was hardly prepared to hear that they have been afflicted with such a terrible blow. And Louise Morel?"

"She affirms her innocence; she swears that her infant was dead at its birth, and her words have the accent of truth. As you take an interest in the family, if you would be good enough to see her, your kindness would alleviate her despair."

"I will visit her, and I shall have here two protegés instead of one—Louise Morel and Goualeuse—for all that you say of this poor girl, interests me much in her welfare. But what must be done to secure her liberty? I could then find a place for her and watch over her interests."

"With the influence which you possess, my lady, there will be no difficulty in releasing her from imprisonment; the whole matter rests with the prefect of police, and the recommendation of a personage of your consideration, will be decisive. But I am wandering, my lady, from the observations which I was intending to make upon the sleep of Goualeuse; and I should not be surprised, if the painful sense of her degradation was joined to another sorrow no less serious."

"To what do you allude, madam?"

"I may be mistaken; but it would not astonish me if the young girl, who has emerged by some means unknown from her first degradation, has felt and yet feels a pure love, which is at the same time the cause of her happiness and misery."

"What reasons induce the belief?"

"The obstinate silence which she maintains, as to the place where she has spent the last three months since she left the Cité, induces me to think that she is in fear of being reclaimed by her friends."

"And why that fear?"

"Because she would then be compelled to avow her past history, which is undoubtedly unknown to them."

"True: her clothes were those of a peasant girl."

"Another circumstance has confirmed my suspicions. Last night, when visiting the dormitory, I approached the bed of Goualeuse, who, unlike her companions, slept very sound. Her face was calm and serene, and her long light hair, released from her cap, fell profusely over her neck and shoulders. Her little hands were clasped together and crossed upon her bosom, as if she had fallen asleep praying to God. I contemplated for some time her angel-like face, when in a low voice, and with an accent at the same time endearing and respectful, she pronounced a name."

"And what was the name?"

After a moment's pause, Madam Armand said: "Although I consider a secret obtained in such a manner as sacred, yet you take such a generous interest in this young girl, that I can intrust you with it. The name was Rodolphe."

"Rodolphe!" exclaimed the Marchioness, with her thoughts reverting to the Prince; and then reflecting that his royal highness the Grand Duke of Gerolstein had probably no relation with the Rodolphe of Goualeuse, she said to the matron, who seemed astonished at her emotion:

"The name surprised me, madam; for, by a singular coincidence, one of my relatives has the same name. But the information which you have imparted to me concerning Goualeuse, interests me so much, that I am more and more desirous of seeing her. Could I not have the pleasure to-day?"

"Yes, madam; I can call her, and can also send for Louise Morel, who is confined in the other department of the prison."

"I should be much obliged to you, madam," said the Marchioness, who was now left alone.

"It is very singular, nor can I account for the strange impression which the name of Rodolphe has produced upon my mind. I must be deranged, to think that any relation can exist between such a creature and the Grand Duke." Then after a moment's pause, she continued: "He was right: how much I am interested in these charitable enterprises! The heart and the mind are both enlarged, when they are employed in such a noble occupation, as he remarks. One seems in some measure to participate in the operations of Providence, in succoring those who are deserving. And these excursions into a class of society of which no one has an idea—how attractive and amusing they become! What romance could inspire me with such touching emotions—could awaken such a degree of curiosity and interest! All that I have heard said of this poor Goualeuse, has affected me with the deepest sympathy. I allow myself to be borne blindly on by my compassion; for the experience of the matron is too sagacious to be exposed to deception. And this other unfortunate girl, the daughter of the artisan, whom the Prince has so generously assisted in my name. Poor people! their awful misery furnished him with a pretext for my rescue. By hypocrisy and falsehood, I have been saved from shame. The load bears heavily upon me; but I will expiate my guilt by a life devoted to benevolent enterprises: my punishment will be my reward. It is delightful to yield implicitly to the noble counsel of the Prince; his praise cheers and encourages me, and animates this new existence to which he has given life. I experience a perfect rapture in being governed by his advice, controlled by his thoughts. I love him! oh, yes, I love him! but he shall be for ever ignorant of this ever-enduring affection of my soul."

While the Marchioness is awaiting Goualeuse, we will return with the reader to the prisoners.

CHAPTER X..... LOUVE AND GOUALEUSE.

Fleur de Marie was clothed in the uniform of the prisoners—a blue gown and a black cap; but the coarse costume could not disguise her exquisite beauty. Her appearance, however, was much changed since her abduction from Bouqueval. Her face, the paleness of which was formerly relieved by a slight flush, was now as white as the purest alabaster; and its sorrowful expression was changed into one of dignified resignation to a destiny of shame. Fleur de Marie seemed to feel, that the patient endurance of every trial and sacrifice was the only path to her restoration to purity—was the only expiation she could make for her past guilt.

"Entreat them, Goualeuse, to have compassion upon me," said Mont Saint Jean. "See how they have scattered about the yard, the rags which I have gathered with so much industry! What pleasure can it afford them?"

Fleur de Marie opened not her lips, but commenced with great zeal to collect the rags which were thrown about the yard. One of the prisoners, in the spirit of mischief, retained under her feet a sort of spencer manufactured of coarse cloth. Fleur de Marie, still bending over her task, raised her imploring glance to the face of the girl, and said, in her touching accent:

"I entreat you, in the name of the poor woman who is weeping, to let me have what is beneath your feet."

The prisoner raised her feet, and Goualeuse rescued the garment, and the other remnants which had been scattered about. Everything was now regained but a little cap, for which the prisoners were ironically contending with each other.

"Come, come," said Fleur de Marie; "show yourselves perfectly kind, by returning the small cap."

"Oh, yes; the cap, the cap! It must be intended for an infant harlequin: it is made of gray, green, and black, with a bed-tick for a lining."

The description of the cap was received with shouts of laughter.

"Laugh at it as much as you please; but I beg of you to return it to me, and do not trample it in the gutter, as you have everything else. Forgive me, Goualeuse, for compelling you to take hold of the dirty remnants," said Mont Saint Jean, in a tone of gratitude.

"Give to me the harlequin cap," said Louve, who took it in her hands, and waved it over her head as a trophy.

"I beg of you to give it to me," said Goualeuse.

"No, no; you wish to return it to Mont Saint Jean."

"Certainly I do."

"Oh! 'tisn't worth while; 'tis nothing but an old rag."

"It is because Mont Saint Jean will have nothing but rags in which to clothe her child, when it is born; that should move your compassion, Louve," said Fleur de Marie, stretching forth her hand for the cap.

"You shall not have it," said Louve, harshly. "Must we always yield to you because you happen to be the weakest? You abuse your privilege."

"What merit would there be in yielding, if I were the strongest?" replied Fleur de Marie, with a graceful smile.

"No, no; I won't be fascinated again by your sweet voice. You sha'n't have the cap."

"Come, come, Louve, don't be cruel."

"Let me alone; you vex me."

"I entreat you."

"Do not enrage me. I said 'no,' and I mean no."

"Have compassion upon her tears."

"I care not for her tears. She was made to suffer."

"That's true; that's true; we ought not to have restored her rags," cried the other prisoners, influenced by the example of Louve. "'Twill vex Mont Saint Jean the more."

"'Twill vex her the more!" said Goualeuse, with bitterness. "She is your victim. She must bear every injury you lay upon her. Her tears are your merriment. You must wear away time in some way or other. Should she be killed on the spot, you would not complain. You are right, Louve; you are just. The poor woman injures no one: she cannot defend herself; she stands alone against all of you; 'tis very brave and generous to torment her!"

"Are we all cowards, then?" said Louve, carried away by her violence. "Will you answer that! Are we cowards?" added she, becoming more and more excited.

Threatening murmurs against Goualeuse were now heard among the prisoners, who began to revolt from the ascendency which she had already acquired.

"She calls us cowards."

"What right has she to censure us?"

"She is no better than we are."

"We have been too kindly disposed toward her."

"And now she begins to put on airs."

"If it is our pleasure to vex Mont Saint Jean, is it any of her business?"

"If she interferes, we will torment you more than we have done before. Do you hear, Mont Saint Jean?"

"Take that to begin with," said one, giving her a blow with the fist.

"And if you meddle with what does not concern you, Goualeuse, you shall be treated in the same manner."

"Yes, yes; that's right."

"And this is not all; Goualeuse must beg our pardon, for having called us cowards," said Louve. "If we do not assert our rights, she will become a tyrant, and we were silly not to perceive it before."

"She must be made to ask our pardon."

"On her knee."

"Yes, on both of her knees."

"If she does not, we will treat her in the same manner that we do Mont Saint Jean, her protegé."

"Down on your knees! down!"

"We are cowards, are we?"

"Repeat it, if you dare."

Fleur de Marie was not in the least startled by these furious cries. She suffered the tumult to subside; and when it was possible for her voice to be heard, she turned her calm, beautiful, and melancholy glance upon Louve, who was vociferating, "Dare repeat those words again," and said to her:

"You, cowards! No, no; it is that poor woman whom you have beaten, whose clothes you have torn; she—she is the coward; do you not perceive how she weeps and trembles! She, I repeat once more, is the coward; for she is afraid of you."

The instinct of Fleur de Marie did not deceive her. If she had appealed to duty, or to their sense of justice, she never would have disarmed the cruel and insensate wrath of these reprobates; but by invoking that sentiment of natural generosity, which is never entirely dormant in the most degenerate natures, she moved their compassion.

Louve and her companions continued to mutter, but they were touched with contrition.

"Your victim does not deserve your pity," continued Fleur de Marie, not wishing to abuse her triumph. "But does not her unborn child? Does it not feel the blows inflicted upon its mother? It is not sensible of the mother's cold, hunger, and suffering. When she entreats you to spare the rags she has had so much trouble in gathering, it is not for herself, but for her infant, that she prays. That cap made from remnants, and lined with ticking, which moves your merriment, moves my tears. You may laugh at both if you are so disposed."

The prisoners did not laugh. Louve even looked with sorrow upon the little cap, which she continued to hold in her hand.

"But I am convinced," said Fleur de Marie, wiping her eyes with the back of her hands, "I am convinced that you have not cruel hearts; you torment Mont Saint Jean from want of any other amusement. But you forget there are two, herself and her child. If she held it in her arms, it would be to her an inviolable shield; it would not only protect its mother against all injury, but its sufferings would draw to its mother's hands all that you could bestow for its relief. Would it not, Louve?"

"Yes, yes: I would give all that I had, with my whole heart. I am not worse than others."

"Neither are any of us."

"A poor harmless little child!"

"Who would injure it?"

"No one but a monster."

"Even wild beasts spare them."

"I told you," said Fleur de Marie, "that your hearts were not wrong. Your error lies in not reflecting that Mont Saint Jean deserves your compassion as much as if her child was in her arms."

"No, Goualeuse, that is not all," replied Louve, with enthusiasm. "You are right: we are cowards; and you were brave in daring to tell us of it, and not to tremble after you had told us. It is in vain for us to contend; we must all admit, that you are a different being from us. It vexes me, but it is so. We were in the wrong a moment since; and you are more courageous than we are."

"That is true: the little blonde must have courage to tell us such truths, right to our faces."

"But these blue-eyed people, soft as they look, when they are aroused——"

"Are real lions."

"How grateful to her, Mont Saint Jean must be!"

"It is true, that when we beat the mother, we beat the child."

"I have never thought of that before."

"Nor I."

"But Goualeuse thinks of everything."

"It is a shame to be at a child."

"Not one of us would be guilty of such actions."

Nothing is more changeable than the passions of a mob; nothing more sudden and violent than the rapidity with which they rush from one extreme to another. A few simple and eloquent words from Fleur de Marie, had produced a sudden reaction in favor of Mont Saint Jean, who was weeping with gratitude. All were moved, because a sentiment which is the last to maintain its ascendency in these abandoned hearts, was invoked—the maternal feeling. On a sudden, Louve, who was violent and impulsive in all her emotions, converted the grotesque cap into a purse, and fumbling in her pocket, drew forth twenty sous, and throwing the money in the cap, said, "I give twenty sous to buy clothes for Mont Saint Jean's infant—pass it round, we will cut and make them ourselves, so that it shall cost her nothing."

"Excellent! excellent! let us take up a collection."

"I will give something."

"'Tis a good idea."

"Poor woman!"

"She is as ugly as a monster, but still she is mortal."

"Goualeuse was right; the sight of clothes made of such rags, is enough to draw tears from the eye."

"I will give ten sous."

"Thirty."

"Twenty."

"And I four, for 'tis all I have."

"I haven't anything, but I will set up at auction my ration for to-morrow; who will buy it!"

"I," said Louve; "I will put in ten sous for you, but you can keep your ration; Mont Saint Jean's child shall be clothed like a young princess."

It would be impossible to describe the surprise and joy of Mont Saint Jean; tears ran down her grotesque and ugly visage, and radiant with happiness and delight, it became almost touching.

Fleur de Marie was also very much delighted, but she was obliged to say to Louve when the cap was presented to her, "I have no money, but I will work to the very extent of my power."

"My little angel from Paradise," said Mont Saint Jean, kneeling at the feet of Fleur de Marie, and attempting to cover her hand with kisses; "what have I done to deserve so much kindness from you and from all these *ladies*, also. Can it be that such a favor is vouchsafed as clothes for my child? good clothes to cover and protect it? Who would have believed that this boon could have been bestowed upon me—me who but a moment since, was the jest and the victim of every one? It was not intended for my harm but for my good, and I have this proof of it; I would not now complain if they should knock me down."

"We have raised eighty-eight francs and seven sous," said Louve, counting the money which had been deposited in the little cap. "Who shall be treasurer? who shall expend the

money? It must not be given to Mont Saint Jean, she is too foolish."

"Let Goualeuse keep the money," was the unanimous cry.

"If you will follow my advice," said Goualeuse, "you will intrust the money to Madam Armand, who will make for us the necessary purchases, and who may be so much pleased with the generous action, that she may, for those who are deserving, solicit a mitigation of our punishment. Well, Louve," said Fleur de Marie, taking her companion by the arm, "do you not feel happier than you did before, when you were scattering to the wind the poor rags of Mont Saint Jean?"

Louve at first made no reply; wild defiance had succeeded to the enthusiastic expression which had lighted up her features. Fleur de Marie looked at her with surprise, not being able to divine the cause of the sudden change. "Come here, Goualeuse," said Louve, with a dark and wild countenance; "I wish to speak with you."

We believe firmly in the influence of certain master spirits, who have such a command over the sympathies and wills of the mass, as to sway its movments according to their own pleasure. Some of these controlling minds being themselves of a bold and energetic nature, address themselves to the worst passions of mankind, and lash them into a storm, as the waves of the sea are raised by the wind; but these storms are as furious as they are temporary, and to the violence succeeds a calm resentment, a sense of wrong and injury, which renders still more aggravated their degraded condition. Louve was one who was endowed with this fatal power.

There is a very different character, more rare than the first, because its generous impulses must be under the direction of a clear understanding, and have sufficient strength of head to equipoise the ecstacies of the heart; who are as powerful in persuading to good as the former to evil. Their salutary influence penetrates gently into the heart, as the warm rays of the sun infuse a reviving heat—as the cool dews of a summer evening refresh the parched and thirsty earth. Fleur de Marie was a personification of this benevolent influence. The power which draws the mind toward virtue is not so sudden and violent in its action, as that which draws toward vice. Its effect is to soften, persuade, and, with a silent and gradual action, incline the impulses and movements of the heart. It is unfortunate that this power is not continuous in its operation; for the mind which has had celestial light poured into it, not unfrequently falls back into the darkness of error; the recollection of the more elevated emotions which once possessed it, gradually fails, and is finally completely effaced. At times, the hardened mind attempts to recall these impressions that have passed away, in the same manner that we attempt to hum the airs which lulled the slumbers of our infancy. The good action with which Fleur de Marie had just inspired her companions, was a fitting emblem of the passing sweetness of this breeze from heaven.

If the reader is astonished to see such displays of courage and authority, from the passive and resigned child of sorrow, he must attribute the change to the influence of the lessons imprinted upon her mind during her residence at Bouqueval, which had so developed all the powers of her nature. She understood that it was not sufficient to weep and lament over an irreparable past, but that active benevolence and vigorous effort, were requisite to restore her mind to its original innocence.

Louve seated herself upon a wooden bench, by the side of Goualeuse. These two beings, so diverse in character, were now side by side.

The pale rays of the winter sun, from a sky sprinkled with fleecy clouds, fell upon them. A few birds, drawn from their retreats by the unexpected warmth, warbled in the branches of the tall trees within the yard; and two or three sparrows, bolder than their mates, came to drink from the waste-duct of the fountain. The sides of the stones which embanked the basin were covered with green moss, and in the interstices some scattered grass and stinted plants had survived the frost. The eye of Fleur de Marie embraced all these details, as it was fixed upon the water, in which the sun, the sky, the clouds were reflected; and her mind reverted to the beauties of nature, of which she was so passionately fond, and from which she was again excluded.

"What have you to say to me,?" asked Goualeuse of her companion, who preserved a gloomy silence.

"We must understand each other; for this cannot last."

"I do not know what you mean, Louve."

"I said to myself, a moment since, 'I will not yield to Goualeuse;' and I have again yielded."

"But——"

"But I tell you, it cannot last."

"What have you to say against me, Louve?"

"I am not the same creature, since you came here. I have lost my strength, my heart, my courage."

Then interrupting herself, Louve raised suddenly the sleeve of her dress, displaying her white muscular arm, covered with a black down. She called the attention of her companion: she pointed out a device in indelible ink, representing a dagger buried in a heart, beneath which these words were inscribed:

"Death to Cowards."
Martial.
P. L. V. (*pour la vie*—for life.)

"Do you see that?" said Louve.

"Yes," replied Goualeuse, turning away her eyes; "it frightens me."

"When Martial, my lover, traced the words 'death to cowards,' with a red-hot needle upon my arm, he thought that I was brave; but if he had seen me within two or three days, he would plunge his poniard in me as the dagger is buried in the heart, and he would be right, for he has written here death to cowards, and I am a coward."

"Why do you call yourself a coward?"

"Because I am one."

"Do you regret the good thoughts which have recently moved you?"

"Yes."

"I do not believe it."

"I tell you I regret them, for it is another proof of the slavery which you exercise over me. Did you not hear what Mont Saint Jean said when she thanked you upon her knees?"

"What did she say?"

"She said that you 'turned us from evil to good;' I was inclined to strangle her when she said it, for to our disgrace, it was true. You change us from black to white; we open our ears to your words, and are carried away by our impulses and become your dupes, as we were a moment since."

"My dupes, because you have assisted this poor woman?"

"That is not the question," said Louve, in rage. "Thus far, I have bowed my head to no one; Louve is my name, and I am well named; more than one woman has my mark upon her; more than one man also; it must not be said that a little girl like you has trampled upon me."

"How can that be, Louve?"

"I know not how: when you first arrived, you commenced by offending me."

"Offending you?"

"Yes. When I asked you for your bread, you gave it to Mont Saint Jean, and I became so furious, that I ran at you with my knife raised."

"And did I not tell you to kill me if you pleased?" said Goualeuse; "that is all."

"That all? Yes, that was all; and those words knocked the knife from my hands, and bent me to your feet, to ask the pardon of you who had offended me. Was that natural? When I recovered my senses, I was ashamed of myself; and when at night you knelt down to say your prayers, instead of raising the whole dormitory to laugh at you, I said she must be left alone to pray; for she has a right to pray. Why were myself and companions ashamed to dress in your presence?"

"I do not know, Louve."

"You do not know!" said Louve, mockingly. "Perhaps you believe what we have told you in jest, that you are a different being from ourselves?"

"I never said that I believed it."

"No, you do not say so; but you act as if you believed it."

"I beg of you to listen to me."

"No; I have injured myself enough already, by looking at you and listening to you. Never before did I envy a mortal living; but I have caught myself two or three times recently in the cowardly and foolish act of envying you. Yes, I fairly envied the holy virginity of that face, those blue eyes, that light hair; I, Louve, who am a brunette, and always hated blondes, I wished to resemble you. A week ago, I would have marked the woman who dared to accuse me of it. It is not your happiness which I envy, for you are as melancholy as a Magdalen. Is all this natural? I ask again."

"How can I account for the impressions I have produced upon you?"

"Ah! you know well enough what you can accomplish with your mild look and sweet voice."

"Of what evil designs do you suppose me guilty?"

"Can I conceive? it is precisely because I am ignorant of the cause of these strange impressions, that I mistrust you. I have another thing to charge you with. I have always before been gay and passionate, but never thoughtful: but you have made

me thoughtful. Yes: certain words which you have spoken, have produced a thousand sad reflections within my mind."

"I regret that I have made you sad, Louve; and I do not remember what I have said——"

"But what you *do*," said Louve, interrupting her companion, with impatience, "is often as moving as what you say: you are so cunning."

"Be not angry with me, Louve; but explain yourself."

"Yesterday, in the work-room, when your head and eyes were bent over the work upon which you were engaged, a tear fell upon your hand; you looked at it for a moment, and then you carried your hand to your lip as if to kiss away the tear."

"It is true," said Goualeuse, blushing.

"It may seem as nothing to you, but the expression upon your face moved me. Do you think there is any fun in that? I have always been as hard as a rock. No one can ever boast of having seen tears in my eyes; and for all that, I must have my heart filled with weakness at the sight of your pretty face; for it is nothing but weakness, as is proved by the fact, that for two or three days I have not dared to write to Martial, my conscience has troubled me so much. Yes, your company softens my heart, and I must put a stop to the process. I have had enough of your society; the consequences would be bad; I know well what I mean. I wish to remain as I am; I will not change and be laughed at by everybody."

"And why would they laugh at you?"

"To see me, who have made every one tremble, play the fool. No, no. I am but twenty years of age; I am as handsome as you are, in my own way; I am savage; I am feared, and that is all I want. I care for nothing else: and anyone die who denies it!"

"You are angry with me, Louve?"

"Yes, you are a bad acquaintance; and if I should associate with you for a week, instead of being called she wolf, I should be called lamb. Thank you: I will not have that surname; Martial would kill me. Finally, I wish to be separated from you entirely; and I intend to ask the matron to remove me to the other department; and if she refuses, I will commit some offence that will confine me to the dungeon until I leave this place. This is what I wished to tell you, Goualeuse."

It was clear to Fleur de Marie that the heart of her companion, which was not entirely vitiated, was struggling with its better tendencies. These indefinite sentiments of remorse, had probably been excited by the involuntary interest which her company inspired. It is a happy thing for mankind, that there are certain spirits endowed with such powers of attraction, that the most hardened being who enters within their sphere, is assimilated in some degree to their own character. Certain apostolic missions have proved this fact. Within a very narrow circle of ideas, such was the singular relation which the spirit of Fleur de Marie had acquired over Louve; but the latter, by a singular idiosyncracy, or rather in consequence of an intractable and perverse disposition, resisted the benign influence which was acting upon her in the same manner that a virtuous character struggles with energy against deteriorating tendencies. If we reflect that vice has a sort of fiendish pride, it will appear less surprising that Louve struggled to maintain her reputation, as a fearless and ungovernable creature, and avert the disgrace of having lamb bestowed upon her as a surname. And yet so many generous impulses mingled with these struggles of her perverted nature, that Fleur de Marie was convinced that the germ of regeneration existed even in the abandoned soul of Louve, and the hope for her rescue which had almost expired, now revived.

"The best manner," thought Goualeuse, "of proving my gratitude to my benefactor, is to infuse into the bosom of another the noble thoughts which he has awakened in my own." Taking with great timidity the hand of her companion, who cast suspicious glances upon her, Fleur de Marie said:

"I assure you, Louve, that you feel for me an interest, not because you are weak, but because you are generous. Elevated natures alone are moved by the misfortunes of others."

"There is no generosity nor courage about me," said Louve, in a surly tone. "I do not wish you to say that I am moved, for it is not true."

"I will say so no more, Louve. But since you have manifested some interest for me, you will allow me, I hope, to be grateful to you."

"I don't care whether you are grateful or not. To-night I shall be in a different prison from you, or in the dungeon, and within a few days, thank God, I shall be altogether free."

"Where will you go, when you leave this place?"

"Home, of course; rue Pierre Lescot. I have a furnished room."

"And I suppose you will see Martial?" said Goualeuse, hoping to interest Louve by speaking of a being dear to her. "You will be very much pleased, I doubt not, to meet him again."

"Indeed, I shall," said Louve, in an earnest tone. "When I was arrested, he was just recovering from a fever, in which he had been thrown in consequence of his being all the time in the water. I did not leave him a moment for seventeen days, and as many nights. I sold half my furniture to pay the doctor for his drugs. I boast of it, for if he lives, it will be owing to me. I had a candle burned for him yesterday. It may be all nonsense, but it often makes sick people much better."

"Where is he now, and what does he do?"

"He lives near the bridge of Asnierès, on the banks of the river."

"On the banks of the river?"

"Yes; he is established with his relatives in a retired house, and he is always at war with the keeper of the fishing-grounds; and when he is once in his boat with his double-barrel gun, it is n't very safe to approach him, I assure you."

"But what does he do?"

"He fishes, in violation of the law, during the night; and as he is brave as a lion, when some cowardly rascal has a quarrel with any one, he employs Martial to take charge of it. His father had some trouble with the bailiffs, and he has yet living a mother, two sisters, and a brother. It would be better for him if he had no brother, for he will lose his head one of these days, and his sisters also—but their necks are their own."

"And where did you become acquainted with Martial?"

"In Paris; he wished to learn the trade of a locksmith. A fine trade; red-hot iron in your hands, and fire around you; plenty of danger; but he had a bad temper as well as myself, and could not endure his masters. Then he returned to his parents, and commenced the trade of poacher upon the river. He comes to see me in Paris, and I go in the day-time to see him at Asnierès. It is quite near, but were it ten times as far I would go there, even if I had to crawl upon my hands and knees."

"You must be very happy in the country, Louve, especially, if, like myself, you love to walk in the fields?"

"I had much rather walk in a large forest with Martial."

"In the forests! And would you not be afraid?"

"Afraid! Pshaw! Afraid! Was a she-wolf ever afraid? The more lonely and thick the forest, the better it would please me. A retired hut, where I could live with Martial, the poacher; accompany him in the night to set snares for the game, and if the keepers dared approach us, send a bullet at them, and escape to the thicket—that would indeed be glorious."

"You have lived in the woods before, Louve?"

"Never."

"Who has inspired you with these ideas!"

"Martial."

"In what manner?"

"He has been a poacher in the forest of Rambouillet. A year ago, he is said to have fired upon a rascally game-keeper, who fired at him. It could not be proved in court, but Martial was obliged to leave that neighborhood. He then came to Paris to learn a trade, but being unable to submit to the tyranny of a master, he preferred to return to Asnierès, near his family, and make maraunding excursions along the banks of the river. But he continually sighs for the woods, and he will return to them one of these days. He has talked to me so much of the forest, and of poaching, that he has filled my head with these thoughts, and it seems to me that I was born for such a life. But it is very natural. What our lovers like, we do. If Martial had been a robber, I would have joined him. The reason we have a man, is to resemble him."

"And where are your parents, Louve?"

"How do I know?"

"Is it long since you have seen them?"

"I do not know whether they are dead or alive."

"Were they unkind to you, then!"

"Neither kind nor unkind. I was eleven years old when my mother ran away with a soldier, and my father, who worked by the day, brought into our garret a woman who was not his wife, and with her came two boys, one of six years, and another of my own age. She was employed by day in selling apples, which she carried about in a wheelbarrow. We got along very comfortably at first, but afterward, there came to our place an oyster-woman, to whom my father showed great partiality, which enraged the apple woman, and from henceforth there were such incessant quarrels and fights in our garret, that it used to frighten to death the boys and myself; for as we had but one room, there was but one bed for all three of us, close to the one which my father occupied. On Saint Madeleine's day—the birthday of

the apple-woman—she reproached my father for not having wished her happiness. From words it came to blows, and my father at last split open her head with a broomstick. I thought it was the end of her, for Mother Madeline fell down like a heap of lead; but her life was not so easily knocked out of her. She recovered, and frequently used to revenge herself upon my father: once she bit out a large piece from his hand. These quarrels resembled the festivals at Versailles, better sustained on Sundays than week-days; on the one there were only blue spots, but on the other red."

"And was this woman unkind to you?"

"No; Mother Madeline was rather hasty in her temper, but with that exception, a very good sort of woman. But my father finally got tired of her, and, giving her the meagre furniture which the room contained, departed, and never returned. He was from Burgundy: I conjecture that he returned to his native place."

"And did you remain with Mother Madeline?"

"Where could I go? She soon formed the acquaintance of a tiler, who came to live in our garret. The oldest of Mother Madeline's boys was drowned at the Island of Swans, and the other was bound an apprentice to a cabinet-maker."

"And what did you do yourself?"

"I accompanied her with the wheelbarrow; I went and carried his dinner to the tiler; and when he came home drunk, which happened very often, I assisted Mother Madeline to give him a sound thrashing, to make him keep the peace; for when he was in drink, he was as furious as a mad donkey; he wished to kill everybody; and one time, if we had not wrenched the hatchet from his hands, he would have murdered all of us: Mother Madeline, as it was, received a cut on the shoulder which bled like a slaughter-house."

"But how were you reduced to your wretched condition?" said Fleur de Marie, hesitatingly.

"The manner in which I lived with the son of Mother Madeline, and the dissoluteness of the tiler, brought me to my present position. I was fearful that Mother Madeline, when she made the discovery, would turn me into the street; but as her disposition was kind, she told me, that since I was sixteen years of age, with a temper too irritable for trade or for service, she would give me a profession authorized by the laws, and as I was without any parents to be responsible for me, she became my [illegible] at the Bureau des Mœurs, where my name was registered. I saw Mother Madeline about a year since. I was at that time taking a drink with one of my lovers. She told me that the tiler had been sent to the galleys. I have not met with her again. Some one told me the other day that she had been carried to the Morgue more than three months ago. I was sorry to hear of it, for Mother Madeline carried her heart in her hand, and had no more gall than a dove."

Fleur de Marie, although she had been accustomed from infancy to an atmosphere of pollution, had since breathed so pure an air, that she experienced a painful oppression at this horrible recital of Louve.

If we have had the courage to repeat this tale of infamy, it is for the purpose of bringing home to the understanding of the refined and elevated classes, the solemn truth, that however revolting it is in its details, it is a thousand times less so than the realities with which they are surrounded. Ignorance and poverty plunge beings born in the image of their Maker, into this frightful abyss of social and moral degradation. In a multitude of dens, children of all ages and of both sexes are thrown promiscuously together, like brutes of the same litter, while before their eyes are examples of drunkenness, debauchery, violence, murder, and not unfrequently, still more frightful and inhuman crimes, complete the catalogue of horrors.

The rich can envelop their vices in darkness and mystery, can observe the proprieties of life, and throw over their guilt the veil of decency and refinement. But the most honest artisan may be compelled to restrict himself and family to a single room, to crowd all his children into a single couch. What must be the result when, instead of being honest, the father of such a family is plunged in ignorance and stained with vice? What a frightful example is spread before the tender mind of childhood, exiled from all that distinguishes man from the lower orders of creation! Can they have any idea of duty, virtue, truth? Will they not be brought up in as utter ignorance of all social distinctions as the abandoned savages of the islands of the sea? The galleys, or a still worse place, is the only prospect of their futurity. Let no one say that we are justifying such a result! Let the reader, however, compare the temptation to which a female who is brought up religiously in the bosom of her own family, raised above the pressure of want, with nothing but worthy examples before her; with the temptations to which such a creature as Louve was exposed, a creature born in vice, raised in vice, as a candidate for that infamous trade which is authorized by the government! Yes, there is a bureau where shame is made legal by registries, signatures, and certificates—a bureau where mothers come to authorize the infamy of their daughters, and husbands, of their wives! Must not society be radically corrupt in its organization, both in its social forms and in the laws which regulate the relation of the sexes, in which power—that grave and severe abstraction—is compelled, not only to tolerate, but also to regulate and legalize such depravity?

CHAPTER XI. ..... CASTLES IN THE AIR.

GOUALEUSE, overcoming the emotion that the sad confession of her companion had occasioned her, said to her timidly:

"Listen to me without being offended."

"Well, speak on; I hope I have jabbered enough, though in fact it's all the same, since it is the last time that we shall ever again chat together."

"Are you happy, Louve?"

"In what way?"

"With the life you lead."

"Here at Saint Lazare?"

"No; at home, when you are at liberty."

"Yes, I am happy."

"Always?"

"Always."

"Then you would not change your lot for another?"

"For what other? There is no other lot for me."

"Tell me, Louve," continued Fleur de Marie, after a moment's silence; "do you not like sometimes to build castles in the air? In prison, it is so amusing."

"Castles in the air? concerning what?"

"Concerning Martial."

"My man?"

"Yes."

"Faith, I have never thought of it."

"Let me then build one for you: for you and Martial."

"Pshaw! what good will it do?"

"It will serve to make the time pass."

"Well, let us have one of your castles in the air, then."

"Imagine then, for example, that you should happen to meet some one who would say to you, 'Abandon your father and mother; your childhood has been surrounded by so many bad examples, that you are more to be pitied than blamed, for what you have become.'"

"For having become what?"

"What you and I, have become," answered Goualeuse, in a mild voice; then continuing, "Suppose this person should say to you, 'You love Martial, he loves you; quit both of you a bad life, and instead of being as you are, become his wife.'"

Louve shrugged her shoulders.

"Do you think that he would have me for his wife?"

"Why not? Except poaching, he has never done anything guilty."

"No: he has poached upon the river as well as in the woods, and he was right. Why are not fish the same as game, that any one has a right to? Where is the mark to indicate their owner?"

"But suppose that, after having renounced his dangerous marauding life upon the river, he should wish to become an honest man; suppose that by a frank determination to adhere to good resolutions, he should inspire such confidence in an unknown benefactor, as to obtain a good situation—made gamekeeper, for example. He who was a poacher would like such a situation, I imagine—you see this is but a castle in the air—the business is pretty much the same; only in one case it would be legal."

"Indeed: yes, a life in the woods is always pleasant."

"One condition only, would be required; that he should marry you and take you with him"

"*I* go with Martial?"

"Yes; you would be so happy, you tell me, to live with him in the midst of the forest. Would you not rather prefer, instead of living in an ugly poacher's hut, where you would both have to conceal yourselves like criminals, to have a nice little cottage where you could be an active and industrious housewife."

"You are joking with me: is such a thing possible?"

"Who knows? It may be; though it is only a castle in the air."

"Ah! that indeed."

"Tell me, Louve; it seems to me that I already see you established in your little cottage, in the depth of the forest, with

your husband and two or three young children. Children! what happiness! is it not?"

"Yes, indeed," cried Louve, with wild animation; "how proud I should be of them."

"What company they would be for you in your solitude! and then as they grew up they would be of such service to you. The youngest would collect the dead branches for your fire; the eldest would attend to the pasturage of one or two cows, that would probably be given to you, to reward your husband for his industry and activity; for having been a poacher, he would make a most excellent game-keeper."

"That's a fact, it is true. Really, these castles in the air are amusing. Go on, Goualeuse, with more of them."

"Your master would be so satisfied with your husband, that he would make you presents, and allow you to have a courtyard and a garden; but then, Louve, you would have to work bravely from morning to night."

"Oh! if that's all, once alongside of my man, work would n't frighten me; I have good strong arms."

"And you would have enough to employ them, I can assure you. There would be so much to do; the stable to take care of, your meals to prepare, the clothes of your family to mend; there's the washing-day, another day for baking, and then again the house to clean from top to bottom; all of which would cause the other game-keepers to say, 'Oh! what a housekeeper Martial's wife is, there is no one like her; from the cellar to the garret her house is a miracle of cleanliness; and then the children always so tidy; it is all owing to Madam Martial being so wonderfully industrious.'"

"Tell me, Goualeuse, is it a fact, that they would call me *Madam Martial*," said Louve, with an air of pride; "Madam Martial!"

"Would it not be better than to be called she-wolf!"

"Certainly: I would rather be called by the name of my man, than by that of a beast; but, bah! bah! a she-wolf I was born, and a she-wolf I shall die."

"Who knows? who knows? You ought not to shrink from a laborious but honest life, it would bring happiness to you. Hard work ought not to frighten you."

"Oh, no; as for that, it is not my man and three or four young ones to take care of, that would trouble me, by any means."

"After all, it would not be all labor: there would be hours of rest. During the winter evenings, when your children are sleeping, and your husband smoking his pipe and cleaning his guns, or fondling his dogs; don't you see, you could have such a nice little quiet time!"

"Pshaw, pshaw! quiet time! to sit with arms folded, and do nothing! Faith, no; I would rather be mending the linen of the family in the evening, in one corner of the room: that 's not so fatiguing in winter, when the days are so short."

While listening to the words of Fleur de Marie, Louve became more deeply lost in dreams of the future, in being drawn further and further from the present; and experienced as lively an interest as Goualeuse had previously felt, when Rodolphe portrayed to her the rustic pleasures of the Bouqueval farm.

Louve did not attempt to conceal the wild tastes with which her lover had inspired her. Remembering the deep and salutary impressions with which Rodolphe had imbued her mind by his joyous picture of a country life, Fleur de Marie wished to tempt Louve by the same means; believing, with truth, that if her companion could be moved by a scene so poor, so solitary and rude, as to anxiously desire such an existence, she deserved both interest and pity.

Delighted at seeing her companion so interested, Goualeuse continued, with a smile:

"Thus you see, *Madam Martial*—for so let me call you, since there is no harm in it——"

"On the contrary, it flatters me," said Louve, smiling and shrugging her shoulders. "But how foolish to play the *madam!* we are like children. Never mind; go on; it 's very amusing. You were saying——"

"I said, Madam Martial, in speaking of your winter life in the midst of the woods, we forgot that the winter is the worst of the seasons."

"Ah, no! it is not the worst. To hear the wind blowing at night in the forest, and the wolves howling from time to time at a distance, I should never find tiresome; provided, I was in one corner of the fireplace, with my man and my little ones, or even all alone without my man, if he was going his round. And then, a gun does not frighten me; if I had to defend my children, I should make good use of it. The she-wolf would take good care of her cubs."

"Indeed, I believe you, you are so brave; while I am such a coward, that I prefer spring to winter. Oh! the spring, Madam Martial, the spring! when the leaves are so green—when the beautiful flowers are blossoming all through the woods, and smell so sweet, so delicious, that the whole air is embalmed by them. It is then that your children will roll about so merrily in the new grass; and the forest will be so thick and bushy, that your house will scarcely be seen through the foliage. It seems to me, that I now see it from here. There is before the door an arbor of vines which your husband planted, and which shades the mound of turf where he sleeps during the excessive heat of the day; while you are going here and there, and now and then warning the children not to wake up their father. I do not know whether you have ever remarked it, but in mid-summer, at noon, the woods are as silent as night: neither the movement of the leaves nor the singing of the birds can be heard."

"That is true," answered Louve, almost instinctively losing sight more and more of the reality, and believing that she could almost see displayed before her the charming picture that the poetic imagination of Fleur de Marie had painted—of Fleur de Marie, so intuitively enamored of the beauties of nature.

Charmed by the profound attention of her companion, Goualeuse permitted her own feelings even to be carried along by the delightful enchantment of the reflections that she evoked, and continued:

"There is one thing that I love almost as much as the silence of the woods: it is the noise of the big drops of rain in summer, falling upon the leaves. Do you not like that also?"

"Yes, indeed; I also like the rain in summer."

"Is it not delightful, when the trees, the moss, the grass, all are well wet, and emit a fresh and delicious odor? And then the sun, when it strikes through the trees, and makes all these little drops of water glisten, as they hang from the leaves after the shower; have you never remarked that also?"

"Yes, I do recollect it, now that you speak of it. How strange it is! You tell all this so well, Goualeuse, that it appears to me that I see it—see it all, just as you describe it. I do not know how to explain it to you; but, as you said, it smells so good, so fresh, like the rain in summer, of which we were speaking."

Poetry, like goodness and beauty, is often contagious. The coarse, rude, and unpolished nature of Louve, was compelled to submit to the mild and seducing influence of Fleur de Marie.

The latter continued, smilingly:

"We must not suppose that we are alone in loving the summer rain; for even the birds, how contented they are! see them shake their delicate wings, and chirp with joy! though not more joyously than your little children, who are as merry, free, and light-hearted as they. When the day is over, notice the youngest—how he runs through the woods at the sight of the eldest, who is driving home the two heifers from the pasturage! how soon he recognizes the distant tinkling of their bells, Louve!"

"Say, Goualeuse, it appears to me that I can even see the eldest and most robust placing his little brother astraddle upon one of the cows, and holding him there."

"Yes, indeed; and you may also perceive that the poor beast knows very well what burthen is on her, she walks with such precaution. But now for the supper hour. The eldest, while bringing the cattle from the pasturage, has amused himself by filling for you a basket of beautiful strawberries, which he has picked from under a thick bed of wild violets."

"Strawberries and violets! Oh, how delicious! But, my God! Goualeuse, where the devil do you get such ideas from?"

"From the woods, where the strawberries grow, and the violets flourish. You have only to look at them and pick them, Madam Martial. But let us return to the housekeeping. In the evening, the cows must be milked, and the supper prepared under the arbor of vines; for you hear the dogs of your husband barking, and you will soon hear also their master's voice, who, although fatigued, enters the cottage singing; and why should he not sing, when, on a beautiful summer's evening, with a contented heart, he returns to a home where a good wife and lovely children await him? why should he not, Madam Martial?"

"That is true: he could do no otherwise than sing," said Louve, becoming still more thoughtful.

"Unless to weep from joy," said Fleur de Marie, deeply moved herself. "And such tears are as sweet as songs. And then, again, when night has set in, what happiness for him to be seated under his own arbor, enjoying the serenity of a lovely evening, breathing the odor of the forest, listening to the prattling of his children, and gazing upon the bright stars. Then the heart is full, so full that it will burst forth into prayer. Why should He not be thanked, to whom we owe the freshness of the evening, the fragrant odor of the woods, and the soft light of the starry heavens? After praying or offering thanks, to sleep peacefully until the morrow, and then again give thanks to the good Crea-

tor, that such a poor and industrious, though calm and honest life is granted to you daily."

"Daily!" repeated Louve, with a fixed look, and her head dropped almost upon her heaving breast. "It is true: God is kind and good, to enable us to live so happy on so very little."

"Say, then," continued Fleur de Marie; "tell me, ought he not also to be blessed like God, who would give you such a peaceable and industrious life, in place of the miserable one that you led in the filthy streets of Paris?"

The word *Paris*, recalled Louve suddenly to the reality.

A strange phenomenon had just occurred within the mind of this creature.

A natural picture of a rude and humble condition, a simple recital, occasionally lighted up by a partial glimpse of the domestic fireside, gilded by a few joyous rays of the sun, refreshened by the gentle breeze of the woods, or perfumed by the odor of wild-flowers, had made upon Louve an impression more deep and striking, than could have been effected by the earnest exhortations of the most transcendent moralist.

Yes; according as Fleur de Marie continued, the desire of Louve to become the indefatigable housekeeper, the hardy wife, and the pious and devoted mother, grew stronger and stronger.

Thus, to inspire a debased and immoral woman, even for a moment, with the love of family, a respect for moral obligations, a disposition for industry, in promising that only which God gives to all—the sun of heaven and the shade of the forests—or that which man earns at the sweat of his brow, bread and a shelter, was a most happy triumph for Fleur de Marie.

Could the severest moralist, or the most fulminating preacher, have accomplished more in pouring on all the most threatening denunciations of human vengeance, or in showering down the most terrible thunderbolts of Divine wrath?

The bitter anger exhibited by Louve on returning to the reality, after being charmed by the novel and salutary vision in which, for the first time, the words of Fleur de Marie had plunged her, proved the influence of those words upon the unhappy creature.

The more bitter were the regrets of Louve, in relapsing from this pleasing imagery into the horror of her real position, the more evident became the triumph of Goualeuse.

After a moment of silence and reflection, Louve suddenly raised her head, passed her hand over her forehead, and arose from her seat, saying, with a most threatening and angry aspect:

"You see, you see, that I had good cause for shunning you, and for not wishing to listen to you, because it would do me harm. Why have you talked to me so? to jest with me, and tantalize me? And that, because I was fool enough to say that I should like to live in the midst of the woods with my man. Who are you, then? Why would you thus derange me? Oh! you do not know what you have done, unfortunate creature! Now, in spite of myself, I shall ever be thinking of that forest, that cottage, of those children, of all that happiness which will never, never be mine. If I shall be unable to forget that which you have told me, my life will be but one eternal hellish punishment! and all your fault—yes, your fault."

"So much the better: oh! so much the better!" said Fleur de Marie.

"Dare you to say, so much the better?" cried Louve, with a menacing look.

"Yes, so much the better; for if your present miserable life should appear to you a hell, you will prefer that of which I have spoken."

"And what good will it do to prefer it, since it is not intended for me? What good to regret being what I am, since I shall die as I am?" said Louve, more and more irritated; and seizing in her strong hand the delicate wrist of Fleur de Marie. "Answer me! Why have you made me desire that which I cannot have?"

"To desire an honest and industrious life, is to become worthy of that life, I told you," answered Fleur de Marie, without attempting to disengage her hand.

"Well! after I am worthy of it? What does that prove? What have I gained?"

"The realization of that which you look upon as a dream," said Fleur de Marie, in a tone so serious and convincing, that Louve, conquered anew, released the hand of Goualeuse, and remained struck with astonishment.

"Listen to me, Louve," continued Fleur de Marie, in a voice filled with compassion. "Do you think me wicked enough to awaken in you such thoughts, such hopes, if I was not sure, in making you ashamed of your present condition, of giving you the means of releasing yourself from it?"

'What! you? You can do that?

"I: no, not I! but one who is good, great and powerful."

"Powerful!"

"Hear me, Louve. Three months ago I was like you—a poor, lost, abandoned creature. One day, he, of whom I speak with tears of gratitude," and Fleur de Marie wiped her tearful eyes, "one day he came to me, and debased and despised as I was, he did not hesitate to speak consoling words to me—the first that I had ever heard. I related to him my sufferings, my wretchedness, my shame, without the least concealment; in the same manner as you have just related your life to me, Louve. After listening to me with attentive kindness, he did not blame me, he pitied me; he did not reproach me in my humiliation, but he painted to my mind, and extolled the pure and calm life of the country."

"As you did just now——"

"Then that humiliation appeared as much more frightful to me, as the future, which he showed me, appeared beautiful."

"My God! like me!"

"Yes; and like you, I said: 'Alas! what good can arise from showing me such a paradise? I, who am condemned to a life of infamous misery?' But I was wrong in despairing; for he of whom I speak is a superior being, supremely just, supremely good, and incapable of exciting a false hope in a poor creature, who asked from no one, neither hope, pity, nor happiness."

"And what did he do for you?"

"He treated me like a sick child. Like you, I was plunged in a corrupted, infected atmosphere. He sent me to breathe an air that was pure and reviving. I lived also among hideous and debased criminals; he confided me to those who were the image of himself, who purified my soul and exalted my mind; for, again in his superiority, all those that he loved and respected, he endowed with a spark of his own celestial intelligence. Yes, Louve, if my words move you; if my tears make yours flow; it is because his mind, and his spirit, inspire me. If I speak to you of a happier future, that you will obtain through repentance, it is because I am able to promise you that future in his name; although he is ignorant at this hour of the promise that I give; and further, if I say to you, 'hope,' it is because he always listens to the voice of those who would reform; for God has sent him upon the earth, that his Providence may be believed in."

While thus speaking, the countenance of Fleur de Marie became radiant with inspiration; her pale cheeks were flushed for a moment with the slightest tint, and her beautiful blue eyes shone with a soft and brilliant lustre; her sweet, her angelic countenance, beamed with a beauty so noble, so touching and attractive, that Louve, already deeply agitated by the conversation, contemplated her companion with a wondering and respectful admiration, and exclaimed:

"My God! Where am I? Do I dream? I have never seen or heard anything like it—it is not possible! But tell me, who are you, that speak so? Oh! I said with truth, 'you are a different being from us.' But, after all, you who talk so well; you who can do so much; you who know those that are so powerful; why are you here—a prisoner with us? But—but—is it not for the purpose of tempting us? You are here then for good, the same as the devil is for evil."

Fleur de Marie was about to answer, when Madam Armand came and interrupted her, for the purpose of conducting her to the presence of Madam d'Harville.

Louve appeared stupefied; the matron spoke to her, saying:

"I observe, with pleasure, that the presence of Goualeuse in the prison has afforded happiness, and been beneficial to you and your companions. I know that you have made a collection for this poor Mont Saint Jean. It is kind, it is charitable, Louve. You will be rewarded for it. I was very sure that you was a much better creature than you appeared to be. As a recompense for this good action, I believe I can promise you that the remainder of your imprisonment shall be shortened."

And Madam Armand left, followed by Fleur de Marie.

The language of Fleur de Marie, almost approaching to eloquence, might excite surprise, did we not know that her nature, so wonderfully endowed, had rapidly developed itself, thanks to the education she had received at the Bouqueval farm. Besides, the young girl had derived much knowledge from experience. The sentiments she had awakened in the heart of Louve, had been awakened in her own heart by Rodolphe, under nearly similar circumstances.

Believing that she recognized some good instincts in her companion, she had endeavored to arouse within her a principle of honesty, by proving to her—according to the theory that Rodolphe had instituted at the Bouqueval farm—that it was her *interest* to become honest; and by exhibiting to her under bright and attractive colors, the application of that theory.

We would here remark, that the general method of proceeding

is ineffectual, and incapable of inspiring the poor and ignorant classes with a horror of evil and a love of good.

For the purpose of turning them from a wicked path, they are incessantly menaced by every vengeance, both human and divine; in their ears is constantly rung the most dismal and terrifying sounds, the clanking of prison keys, the iron fetters and chains of the galleys; and worse still, in the frightful penumbra at the extreme horizon of crime, is exhibited to them, gleaming in the bright glare of eternal flames, the knife of the executioner.

With respect to intimidation, therefore, we see that its operation is incessant, frightful, terrible.

To him who does evil, captivity, ignominy, death. That is right. But to him who does good! does society decree honorable rewards? glorious distinctions? No. By beneficent remuneration, does she encourage this immense mass of mechanics (doomed for ever to labor, to privation, and almost always to utter misery,) to submission, to order, and to honesty! No.

With respect to the scaffold where the guilty ascend, is there also a staging for the good to mount? No. Strange and fatal emblem! Justice is represented as blind, holding in one hand the sword of punishment, and in the other the scales, where the accusation and the defence are weighed. Such is not the image of justice. It is the image of the laws, or rather of the man, who condemns, or acquits, according to his conscience.

JUSTICE should hold in one hand a sword, and in the other a wreath; with the one to punish the wicked, and with the other to recompense the good.

Society will then see, that if the punishment of the wicked is terrible, the rewards of the good are brilliant; even at this hour in its simple and native good sense, it seeks in vain the counterpoise of the courts, of the jails, of the galleys, and of the scaffold. Society sees *criminal justice*, composed of intelligent, incorruptible and resolute men, constantly occupied in seeking out, and in punishing the wicked. It does not see *virtuous justice** composed of intelligent, incorruptible, and resolute men, occupied in seeking out and rewarding the good.

All say to him, 'tremble;' no one says to him,' hope.' All threaten; no one consoles. The state expends annually many millions for the mere punishment of crime. With this enormous sum it supports prisoners and jailers, galley-slaves and their guards, scaffolds and executioners. That is necessary; be it so. But how much does the state expend for the beneficial and encouraging remuneration of the good? Nothing. And that is not all; we will show in the course of the story, when you are conducted to the prisons of men, how many mechanics of an irreproachable honesty, would reach the height of their desires, could they but be certain of actually enjoying the condition of the prisoners, and always have the assurance of good nourishment, a good bed, and a shelter. And now, by virtue of their worth as honest men severely and sadly tried, have they not the right to enjoy the same benefits that are extended to criminals? particularly those who, like Morel the lapidary, had lived industriously, honest and resigned, in the midst of misery and temptation? Do not such men deserve to be sought out by society and rewarded, for the honor of humanity, or at least sustained in the painful and difficult path which they pass through so bravely?

The good, the upright man, however modest he may be, is he concealed in an obscurity deeper than that of the robber or the assassin? and are not the latter ever discovered by criminal justice?

Alas! it is a Utopia in which there is nothing consoling. Let us imagine, for example, a society so organized as to possess, thus to speak, courts for *virtue* as well as courts for *crime*; a public minister signalizing noble actions, and proclaiming them for the observance and admiration of all, to the same extent, as crimes are now denounced to the vengeance of the laws.

Let us take two examples, two recipients of *justice*, and answer which is the most productive of beneficial tendencies, important consequences, and positive results. A man kills another for the purpose of robbing him. At the break of day, the guillotine is solemnly prepared in some deserted corner of Paris, and the assassin is beheaded in sight of the dregs of the populace, who laugh at the judge, at the victim, and at the executioner.

The last words of society are murder! guillotine! The one is the greatest crime that can be committed against society; the other is the greatest punishment that society can inflict. Such is the most terrible, the most salutary lesson, that can be given to the people—in fact, the only one; for nothing serves as a counterbalance to the blood-stained block. No: society presents no other encouraging and beneficent spectacle in opposition to this dismal exhibition.

Let us continue our Utopian speculations.

Would it not be otherwise, if the people had daily before their eyes, examples of great and lofty virtues applauded and actually rewarded by the state? Would they not be incessantly encouraged to do good, if they often witnessed an improving, respected, and august tribunal, calling before it in the sight of an immense concourse, a poor and honest mechanic, whose long life of intelligent and industrious probity would be related, and of whom it would be said: "During twenty years, you have in the midst of suffering, unremittingly labored, and courageously struggled with misfortune. You have brought up your family in principles of uprightness and honor. By your superior virtues, you have become highly distinguished. Be exalted and recompensed. Just, vigilant and all-powerful, society forgets neither the good nor the wicked; each one is paid according to his works. The state guarantees to you a pension sufficient for your wants. Crowned by public favor, you will end in ease and repose, a life that will serve as a lesson to all. Those who, like yourself, give evidence for many years of an untiring perseverance in a righteous course, and exhibit great and rare moral qualities, are thus and ever will be, elevated. Your example will encourage the majority to imitate you. Hope will brighten the painful burthen which fate imposes upon them during a long life. Animated by a laudable emulation, they will struggle with energy for the fulfillment of the most painful and difficult duties, that they may hereafter become distinguished and be rewarded like yourself."

We ask which of these two spectacles, the murderer executed or the upright man rewarded, will produce the most beneficial effect upon the people? It is true many *delicate* minds will feel indignant at the thought of these ignoble rewards being actually granted to the most etherial thing on earth, VIRTUE. They will advance against their tendencies, maxims or reasons of all kinds, more or less philosophical, platonic or theological, and more than all, those that are *economical*. For example:

"Good carries with it its own reward. Virtue is a thing without price. A contented conscience is the noblest recompense. And in fine, that unanswerable and triumphant objection, THAT ETERNAL HAPPINESS WHICH AWAITS THE GOOD IN THE NEXT WORLD, SHOULD BE A SUFFICIENT INCENTIVE TO GOODNESS HERE."

To this we will reply, that society, to intimidate and punish the guilty, does not, apparently, exclusively rely on that Divine vengeance which certainly awaits them in another world. Society anticipates the last judgment-day, by human judgments. Instead of awaiting the inexorable hour when the archangels shall appear in all their shining panoply, with clamorous trumpets and swords of fire, it modestly contents itself with gendarmes.

We repeat: to terrify the wicked, it materializes, or rather reduces to human and perceptible proportions, the anticipated effects of celestial wrath. Why should it not do the same with respect to divine rewards?

But let us forget these foolish and absurd Utopias, as impracticable as real Utopias, which in fact they are. Society is well enough as it is! Such at least will be the response of those who, with tottering steps, vacant eyes, and boisterous laughter leave the joyful banquet.

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* A few days after these lines were written, we perused the *Memorial de Sainte Hélène*, that immortal book, which we consider a rubi no treatise upon practical philosophy; we observed the passage which and then had escaped us.

"The was also one of my dreams, (it is the Emperor who is speaking,) the great events of the war being accomplished and settled after my return to the interior, and in the midst of tranquillity, I would select a dozen good philanthropists—those brave men who live only for the good of others. I would scatter them through the empire, have them visit all parts of it in secrecy, and be accountable to me only; they should be the *guardians of virtue*, to me they would report direct, they would be my confessors, my spiritual directors, and my relation with them would be the accomplishment of my most good works. My principal occupation would then be while at the summit of my power, the thorough melioration of the condition of all classes of society: I would even descend to the furtherance of *individual happiness*.

CHAPTER XII. .... THE PROTECTRESS.

THE matron soon entered the small parlor where Clemence was seated in company with Goualeuse. Her conversation with Louve had brought a slight flush to the habitually pale cheek of the girl.

"My lady the Marchioness, moved by the recommendations which I have given," said Madam Armand to Fleur de Marie, "has desired to see you, and will perhaps solicit your release before the expiration of your sentence."

"I am much obliged to you, madam," said Fleur de Marie, in a timid tone, to the matron, who retired, and left her alone with the Marchioness.

Clemence, impressed with the frank expression upon the features of her protege, of her deportment, marked by its modesty and grace, could not but remember, that in her dream Goualeuse had invoked the name of Rodolphe, and that Madam Armand

believed that the unfortunate prisoner was the victim of a powerful but concealed love. Although the Marchioness was perfectly convinced that there could be no relation between her young friend and the Grand Duke, she was compelled to admit that the beauty of Goualeuse was worthy of the love of a prince.

At the sight of her protectress, whose countenance, as we have before said, was illuminated with the divine beauty of her soul, Fleur de Marie felt her spirit drawn toward the lovely being whose heart had been touched by her misfortunes, with an irresistible sympathy.

"My child," said Clemence, "the matron, while eulogizing the gentleness of your disposition and the exemplary regularity of your character, has complained of your want of confidence in her."

Fleur de Marie hung down her head without a response.

"The dress of a peasant in which you were clothed at the time of your arrest, your silence as to the place of your abode before you were brought to this prison, prove that you are concealing from us certain circumstances which may be important for your welfare."

"Madam!"

"I have no claims upon your confidence, my poor child; I would not wish you to think me inquisitive. But I have been informed that, if I should solicit your liberty, it would be granted; but, before doing it, I should like to converse with you about your projects and resources for the future. Once free, what do you propose to do? If you are determined to pursue, as I doubt not you are, the virtuous path upon which you have entered, impart to me your confidence, and I will place you in a situation to gain an honorable livelihood."

Goualeuse was moved to tears by the interest which the Marchioness manifested in her, and, after a moment's hesitation, said, "You have condescended, madam, to exhibit so much kindness toward me, you show yourself so generous, that I ought, perhaps, to break the silence which I have thus far been compelled, by an oath, to preserve."

"An oath?"

"Yes, madam; I have sworn to hide from justice, and from the persons employed in this prison, under what circumstances was brought to this place. But if you, madam, would promise me——"

"What?"

"To keep my secret, I might confide in you without forfeiting my obligation; for there are respectable people undoubtedly in great anxiety on my account."

"You may rely upon my discretion, for I will only mention what you authorize me to repeat."

"Thank you, madam. I have feared lest my silence should be construed into ingratitude to my benefactors."

The sweet accent of Fleur de Marie, and her elevated and almost select language, filled the Marchioness with astonishment.

"I will not conceal from you, that I am surprised at your language and manners, and I cannot but wonder how, with an education so excellent, you should have fallen——"

"So low, you were about to say, madam," said Goualeuse, bitterly. "Alas! it is only within a very short time that I have been blessed with this education: I owe it to the kindness of a noble benefactor, who, like yourself, madam, without knowing me, and without even the favorable testimonials which have commended me to your notice, deigned to take compassion upon me."

"And who was this protector?"

"I do not know, madam."

"You do not know!"

"He is only known to me by his inexhaustible benevolence. Thank Heaven that I was thrown in his path!"

"Where did you first meet with him?"

"One night in the Cité, madam," said Goualeuse, casting down her eyes, "a ruffian wished to beat me, but this unknown benefactor courageously defended me. Such was my first interview."

"He was, then, a man of the lower orders?"

"The first time I saw him, madam, he used the language and wore the costume of the common people; but afterward——"

"Well, afterward?"

"The manner in which he addressed me, the profound respect which the persons displayed for him to whom he confided me, served to convince me that he had assumed the garb of those who frequent the Cité as a disguise."

"For what purpose?"

"I do not know."

"And you are ignorant of the name of your mysterious protector?"

"No, madam; I am thankful to Heaven that I am able incessantly to bless his name. My benefactor was called Mr. Rodolphe."

Clemence blushed deeply, as the young girl mentioned this word. "And has he no other name?" she asked hastily of Fleur de Marie.

"I do not know, madam, that he has. He was called by no other name than Mr. Rodolphe."

"What is his age?"

"He is still young, madam."

"Is he handsome?"

"His face is as noble as his heart."

The grateful and passionate accent of Fleur de Marie sent a pang to the bosom of the Marchioness. A mysterious and invincible premonition informed her, that the unknown benefactor of the forsaken girl was the Prince himself. The remark of the matron, Clemence perceived, was not without foundation: Goualeuse loved Rodolphe, and had breathed his name during her sleep. But by what singular coincidence could individuals, so widely separated in their social position, have been brought together? Why had Rodolphe assumed a disguise, and penetrated the gloomy depths of the Cité? The Marchioness was unable to solve these questions; but she called to mind the malicious fabrications of the Countess Sarah about the eccentricities of the Prince, and the strange passions to which he yielded himself. Was it not surprising that he should have rescued from ruin this creature of surpassing loveliness and uncommon intelligence? The Marchioness was endowed with most exalted qualities: she was, however, but a woman, and she loved Rodolphe most devotedly; although she had determined to bury the secret in the deepest recesses of her heart. Without reflecting that the whole mystery might be referred to one of those benevolent enterprises in which the Prince indulged; without reflecting that she had mistaken, perhaps, a sentiment of exalted gratitude for love; without reflecting that Rodolphe might be ignorant of its existence, whatever its nature might be; in the first impulse of chagrin and injustice, she could not avoid regarding Fleur de Marie as a rival. Her pride was shocked, as she felt that she was blushing in spite of herself, as she thought of a preference which would be so disgraceful to herself. She said, therefore, in a tone which contrasted cruelly with the warm kindness of her first words: "And how is it, Mademoiselle, that your benefactor leaves you in prison? How did you happen to be placed here?"

"Good Heaven! madam," said Fleur de Marie, in a timid tone, struck by the sudden change of her companion's language; "have I displeased you in anything?"

"And in what way could you displease me?" asked the Marchioness, with haughtiness.

"I thought that you at first addressed me with greater kindness."

"Indeed, mademoiselle! must I carefully weigh each of my words, and modulate each tone? Since I have consented to interest myself in your welfare, have I not a right to ask certain questions of you?"

Hardly had these words escaped from her lips before Clemence, for several reasons, regretted having spoken them: in the first place, on account of a meritorious triumph of generosity over a momentary pang of jealousy; and in the next, by harshness toward the young girl, she would defeat the object she had in view. In fact, the countenance of Goualeuse changed from a frank and confiding expression, to one that was shrinking and timid; and her heart folded up, in the same manner that the delicate leaves of the sensitive plant close and droop at the first touch.

Clemence continued, in a tone the change of which was not so abrupt as to awaken the suspicions of her protegé:

"Indeed, I repeat to you, I cannot understand how, after having received so much kindness from your benefactor, you are still a prisoner here; how, after having returned with sincerity to the paths of virtue, you should expose yourself to an arrest by frequenting a place which was forbidden to you. All this appears extraordinary to me; and you speak also of an oath, which is still more suspicious."

"I have told you the truth, madam."

"I feel assured that you have; for it is only necessary to look at your face, to believe all that you utter. But what I cannot explain in your present condition, increases my impatience and irritates my curiosity; and you must attribute to that the haste of my words. I believe that I was wrong. I have no claim upon your confidence, except my desire of rendering myself useful to you. I am touched with the proof of your trust in me, by offering to reveal what you have disclosed to no other; and I promise you, that while scrupulously silent

as to any secret you may intrust to me, I will do also all in my power to aid you in the object which you propose to attain."

Thanks to this skillful mending of the matter—we beg pardon for the expression—the Marchioness reinstated herself in the confidence of Goualeuse, which she had for a moment lost; and the poor girl reproached herself for having misconstrued the words which had wounded her feelings.

"Pardon me, madam," she said to Clemence; "I was doubtless wrong in not disclosing immediately to you, what you are desirous of learning; but as you asked me for the name of my benefactor, I could not resist the pleasure it affords me to speak in his praise."

"Nothing can be more meritorious; it proves that you are grateful for the services which he has rendered to you. But under what circumstances did you leave the honest people to whom he confided you? Is the oath to which you refer in any way connected with that event?"

"Yes, madam: but thanks to you, I am able, while keeping my oath inviolable, to inform my benefactors of the reason of my disappearance."

"Proceed, my poor child: I am listening to you."

"About three months since, Mr. Rodolphe placed me upon a farm, situated four or five leagues from Paris."

"Did he take you there himself?"

"Yes, madam: he confided me to the care of a lady, as kind as she was venerated, and for whom I soon had all the affection of a daughter. She and the curate of the village, according to Mr. Rodolphe's recommendation, took charge of my education."

"And did Mr. Rodolphe visit the farm frequently?"

"No, madam: he only came there three times during my residence at the farm."

Clemence could not restrain an emotion of joy.

"And were you not very happy when he visited you?"

"Oh, yes, madam! It was more than happiness to me; it was a sentiment of mingled gratitude, admiration, respect, and some fear."

"Fear!"

"Between him and me, between him and the rest, there was such a wide disparity."

"What then was his rank?"

"I do not know, madam."

"But you spoke of the disparity between him and the rest."

"Oh, madam! what exalted him immeasurably above all other beings, was the supreme elevation of his character, and his exhaustless compassion for those who suffer. He imparts to all with whom he associates, his own enthusiasm; the wicked cannot hear his name without trembling; they respect him as much as they fear him. But pardon me, madam, for again speaking in his praise, I will try to be silent; that will best express my admiration, for language is as inadequate to describe it as it is to express the greatness of God."

"Your comparison——"

"Is perhaps sacrilegious. But can I offend God by comparing to Him, the being who has first taught me to distinguish between good and evil?—who has rescued me from an abyss of wo, and breathed into me a new soul!"

"I do not blame you, my child; I fully understand the enthusiasm of your language. But why did you forsake a situation which was so delightful to you?"

"Alas! madam! it was not a voluntary act."

"But who forced it upon you."

"A few evenings ago," said Fleur de Marie, still trembling at the recollection of the events which she narrated, "as I was going to the parsonage, a wicked woman who had tormented me during my infancy, with a man for her accomplice, having laid an ambush for me in a deep ravine, rushed upon me, and after smothering my cries, conveyed me to a carriage."

"What was their design?"

"I do not know, madam: those who seized me were under the orders of some more elevated persons."

"What happened to you after your abduction?"

"The vehicle had scarcely moved, when the wicked woman, whose name was Chouette, said: 'I have my vitriol here, and I will rub it upon the face of Goualeuse, to disfigure her."

"Horrible! my poor child, and who rescued you from such a cruelty?"

"The woman's accomplice, a blind old man, called the Schoolmaster."

"Did he defend you?"

"Yes, madam, upon this occasion and also upon another; a fight took place between him and Chouette, and by his great strength he compelled her to throw the vitriol out of the carriage. Such was the first service which he rendered me, after having aided to place me in the power of Chouette. The night was very dark, and after we had been about an hour and a half in the carriage, we stopped near the place where the road crosses the plain of Saint Denis: a man on horseback seemed to be awaiting our arrival. 'Have you seized her at last?' said he. 'Yes, we have got her,' replied Chouette, who was enraged because she had been prevented from disfiguring my face; 'and if you wish to dispose of her in such a manner that she will give you no more trouble, I can point out a good way; lay her down in the road and let the carriage pass over her neck, and leave her: people will suppose that she was killed by some accident.'"

"What awful guilt!"

"Alas! madam, Chouette was capable of any iniquity; but fortunately for me, the man on horseback replied that he did not wish that I should sustain any injury; that he merely wished that I should be confined for two months, in such a manner that I could not inform or write to any one of my existence. Then Chouette proposed to take me to the house of a man who is called Bras-rouge, the keeper of a tavern on the Champs Elysees. In that tavern there were several subterranean cellars: 'One of them,' said Chouette, 'might serve as my prison;' the man on horseback approved of the proposition, and assured me that after I had spent two months with Bras-rouge, I should be treated in such a manner that I never would regret leaving the Bouqueval farm."

"What a strange mystery!"

"The man gave Chouette some money, and promised her some more when I should be taken from Bras-rouge, and started off full gallop. We continued our journey to Paris. A short time before we arrived at the barrier, the Schoolmaster said to Chouette, 'You wish to shut up Goualeuse in one of the caves of Bras-rouge, and you know very well, that those places are almost always filled with water in the winter season, and I suppose that you desire to drown her.' 'Yes,' replied Chouette."

"But, good Heaven! my child, what have you done to this cruel wretch?" exclaimed the Marchioness.

"Nothing, madam, but still she has persecuted me from my childhood. The Schoolmaster replied, 'I do not wish that Goualeuse shall be drowned, and I will not permit you to take her to the cave of Bras-rouge.' Chouette seemed to be as much surprised as myself, that aid should be raised up for me from such an unexpected source; and she flew into a fit of violent rage, and swore that she would take me to the house of Bras-rouge, in spite of the Schoolmaster. 'I defy you,' said the man; 'I hold Goualeuse by the arm and I will not relax my grasp; if you dare to approach her, I will strangle you.' 'But what then do you intend to do with her?' exclaimed Chouette, 'she must be concealed somewhere for two months.' 'I can invent a plan,' said the Schoolmaster; 'we will approach the Champs-Elysees and order the driver to stop near one of the stations of the police; you will go after Bras-rouge to his tavern, and as it is midnight, you will find him at home; he will accompany you to the carriage, and will take Goualeuse by the hand and complain of her at the station of the guard, as being a girl from the Cité, whom he found wandering about his tavern; for such girls are sentenced to three months imprisonment, when they are found upon the Champs-Elysees; and as the name of Goualeuse is still upon the register, she will be sent to Saint Lazare, where she will be as securely concealed as in the cave of Bras-rouge.' 'But,' said Chouette, 'Goualeuse will not allow herself to be arrested; once at the station of the guard, she will assert that she was forcibly seized, and will denounce us; and suppose even that she is sent to prison, she will write to her protectors and everything will be discovered.' 'No,' said the Schoolmaster, 'she will go to prison without resistance; and she must swear to denounce us to no one as long as she is at Saint Lazare, nor afterward; she will do that, at least, for I have prevented you from throwing the vitriol into her face and from drowning her in the cave of Bras-rouge; and if she dares to violate her oath, we will set fire to the farm house at Bouqueval, and murder every one there.' Then addressing me, he said, 'Decide; take the oath which I require; all the punishment which you will suffer, will be imprisonment for two months in Saint Lazare; and if you do not take the oath, I will surrender you to Chouette, who will drown you in the cave of Bras-rouge. Come, decide in a hurry; I know that if you take the oath, you will keep it.'"

"Did you take the oath?"

"Alas! madam, I did; the frightful death with which they threatened, forced me to yield: almost any other form of death I could have endured."

"What a desponding spirit for a child of your age to possess!" said the Marchioness, looking at Goualeuse with surprise. "Will you not be rejoiced when you leave this place and return to your benefactor! Will you not feel that the past has been effaced by your sincere repentance?"

"Can the past be forgotten or effaced? can repentance annihilate the power of memory?" exclaimed Fleur de Marie, in such a desperate tone that the Marchioness shuddered.

"But any grief can be washed away, my child."

"Does not the remembrance of infamy, madam, become more poignant, as the soul increases in elevation and purity? Alas! the higher we arise, the deeper seems the abyss from which we have ascended."

"You have, then, lost all hope of restoration and forgiveness?"

"I expect pardon from others, madam. Your kindness proves that remorse always meets with indulgence."

"*You* are determined, then, to be the only one who is merciless."

"Others may be ignorant of what I have been, may forget or forgive it; as for me, madam, I never can forget it!"

"And sometimes you desire to die?"

"*Sometimes!*" said Goualeuse with a bitter smile; and then, as if placing a restraint upon herself, added, "yes, occasionally I do wish to die."

"And yet you feared to be disfigured by that horrible woman; and if you think so much of your beauty, it proves that life is not without its charms for you. Have courage, I pray you."

"It may be a weakness, madam; but, if I have the beauty which you have been pleased to praise, I wish that it may be preserved, till with my dying breath I pronounce the name of my benefactor."

The eyes of the Marchioness filled with tears.

Fleur de Marie had pronounced these last words with such extreme simplicity, with her face pale, downcast and holy, and with a melancholy smile that harmonized so well with her language, that the sincerity of this fatal wish could not be doubted. The Marchioness was herself endowed with too much susceptibility, not to know how much there was mournful and unyielding in the thought of the poor girl, "*I never can forget what I have been!*" that it was one of those ever present and fixed ideas which must torture the whole existence of Fleur de Marie. Clemence was ashamed of herself for having mistaken, for a single instant, the disinterested generosity of the Prince; and regretted bitterly the absurd pang of jealousy which had gained a momentary ascendency against the poor sufferer, who expressed, with such artless enthusiasm, her gratitude to her benefactor. The admiration for Rodolphe with which the soul of the friendless prisoner was imbued, augmented the deep love for him which the Marchioness had vowed to hide for ever in her own bosom. To escape from these reflections she continued the conversation.

"I hope that, in future," said she, "you will be less severe upon yourself. But let us speak of your oath: I now understand your past silence; you did not wish to denounce those wretches?"

"Although the Schoolmaster had conspired against my safety, I was twice indebted to him for defending me, and I did not wish to show myself ungrateful."

"And thus you lent yourself to the designs of the monsters?"

"Yes, madam, I was too much frightened to oppose them. Chouette went after Bras-rouge: he came and conducted me to the station, and informed the guard that he had found me wandering about his tavern. I did not deny it, and was accordingly arrested and brought here."

"But your friends at the farm must be suffering great anxiety on your account."

"Alas! madam, in the first impulse of my fear, I did not reflect that my oath would prevent me from assuring them of my safety, and I am now much afflicted on their account. But, without forfeiting it, I think I can ask you to write to Madam George, at Bouqueval, to give herself no trouble on my account; but without, however, informing her where I am at present, for I promised to preserve silence upon that point."

"My child, such precautions will become entirely useless, if, at my solicitation, you are discharged; and to-morrow you will be able to return to the farm without forfeiting your oath. Upon some other occasion, you can consult your benefactor as to what extent you are bound by an obligation imposed upon you by threats."

"You believe, then, madam, that by your kindness I shall soon be enabled to leave this place?"

"You are so deserving, that I doubt not that I shall be successful in my application, and that by the day after to-morrow, you will be able to return to your benefactor."

"But how, madam, do I deserve from you so much interest? How can I express my gratitude?"

"By continuing to act as you have heretofore done. I regret only that I cannot watch over your future welfare; that pleasure your friends have reserved for themselves."

Madam Armand now entered in haste, and apparently in consternation.

"My lady Marchioness," said she, "I fear that I am a messenger of evil tidings!"

"To what, madam, do you refer?"

"The Duke de Lucenay is below, and he comes from your house."

"Good Heaven! you frighten me! What is the matter?"

"I know not, madam. My lord the Duke says that he is the bearer of intelligence as melancholy as it is unexpected. He learned from his wife, the Duchess, that you were here, and has followed you in haste."

"Melancholy news!" said the Marchioness to herself, and then exclaimed, in a distressing tone of voice, "my daughter! perhaps 't is my daughter. Oh! speak to me, madam!"

"I do not know, my lady."

"I beg of you, conduct me to the Duke," said the Marchioness, leaving the room in great agitation, followed by Madam Armand.

"Poor mother!" said Goualeuse, sadly, following the Marchioness with tearful eyes. "Oh, no! it cannot be! such a calamity could not have befallen her at the very moment she was showing so much benevolence to me. No, no; it is impossible!"

CHAPTER XIII. ..... A FORCED INTIMACY.

We will now conduct the reader to the house in the rue du Temple, at about three o'clock upon the same day of the suicide of the Marquis d'Harville.

Mr. Pipelet was alone in the lodge, and, being a faithful and industrious laborer, was busily employed in mending the same boot which had so frequently fallen from his hands, during the late audacious trick of Cabrion, to which we have referred. The physiognomy of the exemplary and continent porter was more sorrowful and dejected than usual. As in the humiliation of recent defeat, the downcast soldier passes sorrowfully his hand over the scars of former wounds, in the same manner Mr. Pipelet, heaving a deep sigh, would interrupt his melancholy labors, and extend his trembling finger over the fracture his venerable chapeau had received from the audacious hand of Cabrion.

His wounds were then torn open afresh; his sorrows, anxieties and grief, at the unprovoked and unceasing annoyances and persecutions inflicted upon him by his tormentor, awoke with all the pangs of a recent injury. It cannot be said that Mr. Pipelet was blessed with faculties of a very elevated order; it cannot be said that he had a very original or poetical turn of mind; but yet, he possessed very good and substantial common sense. From the sedate and unimaginative character of his mind, he was unable to enter into the wild and roystering spirit, of what is called among artists, a *charge*; and the worthy porter was now concentrating all his energies, to devise some probable rational motive for the extraordinary conduct of Cabrion. He puzzled himself with a thousand profound solutions of the mystery, and at times, like the philosopher Pascal, he was seized with a vertigo while engaged in fathoming the bottomless abyss which the infernal genius of the painter had opened beneath him. Whenever he poured forth his heart in confidence to Madam Pipelet, he was immediately driven back upon himself by the coarse materialism of the portière, who, seizing upon facts and spurning theories, insisted upon regarding the whole of it as a joke.

A man of Mr. Pipelet's serious and grave turn of mind, could not repose upon such an unnatural solution; he was rather displeased at the perverse blindness of his wife, and his dignity as a man, was wounded at the idea that he could be made the victim of such a vulgar thing as a joke; and he felt assured that the eccentric conduct of Cabrion was a mere veil, which concealed some dark, deep and mysterious conspiracy. In the solution of this perplexing problem, the man of the broad-brimmed chapeau was employing all the energies of his intellect.

"I would rather carry my head to the scaffold," said the austere philosopher, who always magnified any proposition upon which his mind was employed, "than admit the conclusion that Cabrion persists in this wild and unnatural eccentricity of behavior, for the absurd purposes of a joke. A joke is played to catch the ear and move the mirth of the galleries; but in his last audacious enterprise the scoundrel had no spectators present; he acted alone and in the dark, as he always does; he clandestinely broke upon the solitude of my lodge, to profane my forehead with his polluting kiss. For what purpose? for what purpose, I ask, of any disinterested and dispassionate mind? It could not have been in the spirit of bravado, for he had no witnesses of his audacity; he could not have kissed me to gratify

his sensual appetite—the laws of nature are opposed to it. It could not have been a salute of friendship, for I have but one enemy in the world, and he is the man. It must be acknowledged that he was under the influence of some mysterious motive, which defies the power of reason to penetrate. To what, then, can this diabolical plot tend, which is pursued with a perseverance which alarms me. It is the unfathomable and impenetrable nature of the mystery which consumes my happiness, and gradually undermines my constitution."

Such were the painful reflections of Mr. Pipelet, at the time we introduce the reader. The honest porter had just opened afresh his bleeding wound, by touching a fracture in his hat, when a sharp and piercing voice, proceeding from the upper stories of the house, and echoed from the stairway, pronounced these words: "Quick, quick, Mr. Pipelet; come up here, be in a hurry!"

"I am not acquainted with that voice," said Mr. Pipelet, reflecting a moment upon the words which he had heard, and dropping the arm which was thrust in the leg of the boot.

"Mr. Pipelet, do make haste!" repeated the voice in an angry tone.

"Those organs are entirely novel to me. It is a male voice which calls, that I can affirm; but it seems to me to suggest no sufficient reason for leaving my lodge, and leaving it also without a guardian? Desert it during the absence of my spouse? Never!" exclaimed Alfred, heroically, "never! never!"

"Mr. Pipelet, do come quick: Madam Pipelet is fainting."

"Anastasie," exclaimed the porter, rising from his seat; "child that I am," added he, resuming his position, "it cannot be my spouse, for she has been absent for an hour; but yet she may have entered without my having observed her. It would be extraordinary, to be sure, but I believe that I must admit the supposition."

"Mr. Pipelet, Mr. Pipelet, come up here quick: I have your wife in my arms."

"My wife in his arms!" said he, hastily rising.

"I cannot unlace Madam Pipelet's stays, without help," cried the voice.

These last words produced a magical effect upon Alfred; he became purple with shame; his modesty was outraged.

"The masculine and strange organs speak of unlacing Anastasie's stays. I oppose it, I forbid it!" he exclaimed, as he started to rush from the lodge, but halted on the threshold.

Mr. Pipelet found himself in one of those critical and dramatic positions, which are often expatiated upon by the poets. On one side, duty charged him to remain in the lodge; upon the other side, the susceptibility of his character, and the voice of marital honor, called him to the upper stories of the mansion. In the midst of this perplexity, the voice continued:

"You won't come, Mr. Pipelet? Well, I shall be obliged to close my eyes and cut the strings."

This final threat seemed to decide his wavering mind. "Sir! sir!" he exclaimed in the voice of a Stentor, and rushing in affright from the lodge, "in the name of honor I adjure, I adjure you to cut nothing, but leave my wife in tact: I am coming, I am coming;" and Alfred rushed up the dark passage, forgetting in his agitation to close behind him the door of the lodge.

Hardly had the porter left the lodge, when a man suddenly entered, took from the table the hammer of the cobbler, jumped upon the bed, and by means of a few tacks, already inserted, nailed a thick pasteboard against the wall of the dark alcove, which we have described, and then disappeared.

The operation was performed so quickly, that the porter, who had hastily returned to close and lock the door, which he had forgotten in his alarm, had no ground for suspecting that any one could have entered the lodge during the interval.

After this precautionary measure, Alfred again rushed to the assistance of Anastasie, exclaiming "I am coming; cut nothing; here I am: I place my wife under the guardianship of your honor."

The worthy porter seemed to be destined to emerge from one surprise only to fall into another; he had advanced but a few steps on the stairs, before he heard the voice of Anastasie, not in the upper story, but in the alley—the voice sharper than ever, exclaiming:

"Alfred, Alfred, why do you leave the lodge without a keeper, you old runaway?"

Mr. Pipelet was at this moment about placing his foot upon the landing of the first floor; he stopped, as if petrified by the shock, with his face turned toward the bottom of the stairs, his mouth stretched open, his eyes fixed, his foot raised.

"Alfred," again exclaimed Madam Pipelet.

"Anastasie is below, she is not up stairs fainting," said Mr. Pipelet to himself, submitting to the incontrovertible deduction from the premises; "but where could have been the unknown and masculine voice, that threatened to unlace her stays? what is he? can it be an impostor, who takes cruel pleasure in tormenting me with anxiety? What can be his intentions? It is certainly extraordinary. Never mind, do your duty, happen what may; after I have answered my wife, I will ascend the stairs and clear up the mystery—I will attempt to identify the voice of the man."

Mr. Pipelet descended and found himself confronted with his wife.

"Is it you?" exclaimed the porter, doubtingly.

"To be sure it is me! Who do you wish it to be?"

"Is it you! Do not my eyes deceive me?"

"Look here, now: why are you rolling up your eyes in that style! Are you going to eat me up?"

"It is because your presence reveals, that most strange and mysterious events are in progress."

"What events? Come, give me the key of the lodge. Why do you leave it alone? I have just returned from the office of the diligence to Normandy, whither I went in a cab, to carry the trunk of Mr. Bradamanti, who does not wish to have it known that he is going to-night, and who will not trust that little urchin, Tortillard; and he is right."

With these words, Madam Pipelet took the key from her husband and entered the lodge followed by the porter. Hardly were the couple over the threshold, before an individual descended the stairs, passed hastily before the lodge, and disappeared.

This was the male voice which had so much excited the apprehensions of Alfred.

Mr. Pipelet fell heavily into his chair, and said to his wife in a complaining tone:

"Anastasia, I do not feel as well as usual to-day; there are very many strange things going on here."

"There you are again, with your endless fears. Strange things take place everywhere. What is the matter with you? Speak: you are all in a sweat. What ails you, old beloved?"

"Yes, I am in a sweat, and I have reasons for it; for things occur in this house that knock a man down."

"What is the difficulty now? You never can keep yourself quiet a moment, but must always be trotting about the house, like a starved cat, instead of quietly taking care of the lodge."

"Anastasia, you display your ingratitude, when you accuse me of trotting about like a starved cat; for it was for your sake that I trotted."

"For my sake!"

"Yes, to rescue you from an outrage which would have drawn tears from our eyes, and covered our faces with blushes. To save you, I deserted a post, which I consider as sacred as the sentry-box of a soldier."

"What! have they offered an outrage to me!"

"It could not have been offered to you, for it was threatened above stairs, and you had gone out. But——"

"The devil take me, if I understand a word of what you are singing about; I believe that you are decidedly cracked. I must believe that the rascality of Cabrion has deranged your mind. Since his trick of the other day, you are not the same man; you look as if you were frightened to death. Must that rascal be always your nightmare?"

Hardly had Anastasia uttered these words, when a strange incident occurred. Alfred was seated with his face toward the bed. The lodge was partly lighted by the dim glare of a winter's day, and the glimmering flame of the lamp. At the time when his wife pronounced these words, Mr. Pipelet thought that he discerned in the obscure alcove, the immovable and roguish features of Cabrion. The same man! the peaked hat, the long hair, the thin face, the satanic laugh, the pointed beard, the fascinating eye. For a moment, Mr. Pipelet thought that he was in a dream; he passed his hand over his eyes to dispel the illusion. It was no illusion. Nothing could be more real than the apparition. Frightful spectre! the body was not seen, but the face glared upon him from the obscurity of the alcove. As the vision burst upon him, Mr. Pipelet uttered not a word, but fell back suddenly, raised his right arm, and pointed to the face, with such a gesture of alarm, that Madam Pipelet turned round to ascertain the cause of a fear which, in spite of her usual audacity, she now partook. She moved two steps backward, and grasping with nervous violence the hand of Alfred, exclaimed:

"Cabrion!"

"Yes!" muttered Mr. Pipelet, in a deep-drawn voice, closing his eyes.

The amazed stupor of the two beholders was exceedingly complimentary to the artist, who had admirably delineated upon the pasteboard, the features of Cabrion.

Recovering from her first surprise, Anastasia ran with the intrepidity of a lioness, jumped upon the bed, and pulled the pasteboard from the wall, to which it had been nailed. The amazon concluded the brave enterprise, by giving utterance to one of her ordinary expressions, as a shout of victory: "Go ahead!"

Alfred, with his eyes still closed, and his hands stretched forward, remained fixed and immovable, as usually happened to him at critical junctures of his life. The convulsive trembling of his hat alone indicated the violence of his internal emotions.

"Open your eyes, old beloved," exclaimed Madam Pipelet, in a triumphant tone; "it is nothing but a painting—a mere portrait of the wretch Cabrion. See how I will stamp upon it." And in the height of her indignation, Anastasia dashed the portrait to the ground, and trampling it under her feet, exclaimed: "This is the way I should like to treat the flesh and bones of the detestable villain!" and then picking up the portrait, said: "Look, look! how the rascal bears my marks upon him."

Alfred shook his head dubiously, without uttering a word, and made a signal to his wife, to remove the repulsive visage.

"Did you ever know such an impudent fellow?" exclaimed the portière; "he has written at the bottom, in red letters: '*Cabrion, to his good friend Pipelet, for life.*'"

"His good friend for life!" muttered the porter; and he raised his hands to Heaven, as if imploring it to witness the insulting irony.

"But how did it get here?" exclaimed Anastasia. "The portrait certainly was not here this morning when I made the bed—of that I am very sure; and you carried with you the key of the lodge when you left a moment since, and no one could have entered during your absence. I ask again, how the portrait came here? Did you nail it there by chance, old beloved?" asked Madam Pipelet, in a categorical vein.

At this monstrous and absurd hypothesis, Alfred started upon his seat, and opened his eyes wide in astonishment and anger. "Who! I!" he exclaimed; "is there a human being who can suppose that I could hang upon my alcove the portrait of the wicked malefactor who, not content with persecuting me by his odious presence, tortures me with dreams by night and with portraits by day? Do you wish to drive me mad, to derange my intellect entirely, Anastasia?"

"Well, after all, suppose that you and Cabrion had settled your difficulties amicably during my absence, where would have been the harm?"

"Cabrion and Pipelet settle their difficulties amicably! Gracious Heaven, dost thou hear her!"

"And then, he might have presented you with his portrait as a token of friendship. If it was so, do not deny it."

"Anastasia!"

"If you made up with him, you must confess that you are as capricious as a pretty woman."

"My spouse!"

"But, after all, no one but yourself could have nailed the portrait to the wall."

"Me? monstrous!"

"What other person could have done it?"

"You, madam!"

"*I!*"

"Yes!" exclaimed Mr. Pipelet, in wrath; "I am compelled to believe that you did it this morning, while my back was turned to the bed."

"But, my old beloved——"

"I tell you, it must have been you, or otherwise I shall be forced to believe it was the devil; for I have not left the lodge. I went up stairs to answer the masculine voice: I took the key with me. You opened the door just now. Deny it if you can."

"All that is true."

"You confess, then?"

"I confess that I understand nothing at all about it. It is a joke, and admirably done, that I must say."

"A joke!" exclaimed Mr. Pipelet, carried away by the violence of his indignation; "here you are again with your jokes. I tell you, that all this hides an abominable conspiracy. It is a snare, a plot; it is an attempt to conceal an abyss by flowers. They are attempting to prevent me from discovering the precipice over which they wish to plunge me; all that is left for me is to place myself under the protection of the law. I am thankful that God protects France!" and Mr. Pipelet walked toward the door.

"Where are you going, old dear?"

"To the commissioner, to enter my complaint; and take with me this portrait, as a proof of the persecutions to which I am exposed."

"But of what will you complain?"

"Of what will I complain? That my most inveterate enemy will find means, by clandestine proceeding, to suspend his accursed portrait over my nuptial couch, and to ask if the magistrates will not throw over me their shield. Give me the portrait, Anastasia; do not present the painted side to me, 'twould shock my feelings. The traitor cannot deny that he wrote with his own hand: 'Cabrion, to his friend Pipelet, for life.' Yes, for life! that is what it is for; it is to have my life that he persecutes me, and he will get it, I doubt not, before long. I shall dwell in continual alarm; I shall believe that this infernal being is always present, under the floor, in the wall, on the ceiling; that at night, his eyes stare upon me while I am sleeping in my spouse's arms; that during the day, he is standing behind me with his sardonic grin. Who can say, that at this very moment he is not here, somewhere concealed, like a venomous insect? Let us see: Are you here? are you here?" said Mr. Pipelet, accompanying his invocation with a sweeping motion of the hand, as if he would examine every part of the lodge.

"I am here, my good friend," responded, in an affectionate tone, the well-known voice of Cabrion. The voice seemed to proceed from the bottom of the alcove, thanks to ventriloquism, of which the eccentric artist was an adept, who had stood outside of the door, watching the minutest details of this scene. After having pronounced these words, however, he darted away, in order that a new mysterious topic for astonishment, wrath, and meditation, might be presented to his victim. Madam Pipelet, with her habitual courage and incredulity, looked under the bed, and examined every corner of the lodge, without discovering any one from whom the voice might have proceeded. She even visited the alley, without being any more successful in her researches; while Mr. Pipelet, completely overpowered by this last blow, had fallen back upon his seat in a state of desperate gloom.

"It is nothing, Alfred," said Anastasia, who always showed her strength of mind. "The scoundrel was concealed near the door, and while I was looking for him in one direction, he fled in another. Have patience; I'll catch him one of these days, and then I will make him swallow my broomstick."

The door was now opened, and Madam Seraphin, the housekeeper of the notary, Jacques Ferrand, entered the lodge.

"Good morning, Madam Seraphin," said the portière, who seemed anxious to conceal from a stranger's eye her domestic inquietudes, and assumed an affable and pleasing tone. "How can I serve you?"

"In the first place, I beg of you to tell me what is the meaning of your new sign?"

"Our new sign?"

"Yes; the small placard."

"A small placard?"

"Yes; black ground with red letters, nailed above the door of your alley."

"How so? In the street?"

"Yes, in the street, directly above your door."

"I am at a loss, my dear Madam Seraphin, to understand what you mean. Do you know, old beloved?"

Alfred remained silent.

"As it concerns Mr. Pipelet, he should explain it to me."

Alfred uttered an inarticulate groan, accompanying it with a shake of his broad-brimmed hat, which pantomime indicated that the philosopher was incapable of explaining anything to the comprehension of other minds, owing to the weighty problems with which his own was preoccupied.

"Take no notice of it, Madam Seraphin," said Anastasia. "Poor Alfred has cramps in the stomach, which make him exceedingly eccentric; but what do you mean by the placard? It belongs, I presume, to the wine-dealer, next door."

"No; I tell you that it is a small placard, fastened above your own door."

"Come, come; you must be jesting."

"Not at all. I just observed it when I was coming in. These words are on it inscribed in large letters: 'PIPELET AND CABRION CARRY ON A TRADE OF FRIENDSHIP, ETC. *Address the porter.*'"

"Good Heaven! Is that written above our door? Do you hear, Alfred?"

Mr. Pipelet cast a wild glance upon Madam Seraphin. "He did not understand it; he did not wish to understand it."

"Is that written upon a placard over the door?" said Madam Pipelet, overwhelmed by this new atrocity.

"Yes, for I just read it; and I said to myself; 'how singular it is, that Mr. Pipelet, a shoemaker by trade, should inform the passers by, 'that he carries on a trade of friendship with a Mr. Cabrion! what can be the meaning of this?' said I; 'there is something about it that is not clear, but as it says on the sign, 'address the porter,' I concluded that Madam Pipelet would

explain it; but do look," said the housekeeper, suddenly, "your husband looks as if he were in a fainting fit; support him, I beg of you, or he will fall."

Madam Pipelet received the much-enduring man, half-swooning in her arms.

The last blow was too violent; the man with the broad-brimmed chapeau apparently lost all consciousness, in attempting to utter these words: "The wretch has publicly exposed me."

"I told you, Madam Seraphin, how liable Alfred is to cramp in the stomach, to say nothing of a villainous scoundrel, who is constantly pricking him to death with pins. The poor old darling cannot endure long. I have fortunately here a drop of absinth, that will perhaps place him on his feet again."

Thanks to this infallible panacea of Madam Pipelet, Alfred recovered by degrees; but hardly had he regained his consciousness, before he was exposed to another grievous trial.

A person of mature age, respectably clothed, with an open and inquisitive expression of countenance, the perfect ideal of a Parisian star-gazer, opened the glass portion of the door, and with an air of excited curiosity, said: "I have just seen written upon a sign above this door, '*Pipelet and Cabrion carry on a trade of friendship, etc. Address the porter.*' Will you have the kindness to tell me the meaning of this? I believe that you are the porter of this house!"

"What does it mean!" exclaimed Mr. Pipelet, in a thundering voice, giving vent to his smothered indignation; "it means, sir, that Mr. Cabrion is an infamous impostor."

The star-gazer, at this furious explosion, moved back. With exasperated looks, a fiery eye, and a red face, the porter had protruded his body half out of the lodge, supporting his wrinkled hands upon the door, while the figures of Madam Seraphin and Anastasia could be dimly discerned in the obscurity of the lodge.

"Learn, sir, that I have no intercourse with Cabrion, and least of all, one of friendship."

"That's a fact; and you must have been kept for a long time in a jar, you old pickle, to come here with such a silly question!" exclaimed Madam Pipelet, in a sharp tone, and showing her crabbed visage above the shoulders of her husband.

"Madam," said the star-gazer, gravely moving back another step, "signs are made to be read. You have put up a sign, and I have read it. I had a right to do so, and you are wrong in addressing me in such insulting language."

"Insulting! You are an old gomus!" exclaimed Madam Pipelet, showing her teeth.

"You are an ill-bred woman."

"Give me your strap, Alfred. I wish to take a measure of this fellow's shoulders, to teach him not to attempt to play the buffoon at his age."

"Are you in the habit of insulting people, when they come to inquire about things written on your sign? You have not heard the last of it, I can assure you, madam."

"But, sir!" exclaimed the unhappy porter.

"But, sir!" repeated the star-gazer, in a passion. "Carry on your trade of friendship with your Mr. Cabrion, as much as you please, but don't stick your sign out into the face of passers by. I feel myself obliged to tell you, that you are an impertinent and ill-bred puppy, and that I shall proceed immediately to enter my complaint at the police."

And the star-gazer disappeared in a passion.

"Anastasia," exclaimed Mr. Pipelet, in a foreboding tone; "I cannot survive this—I feel it—I have had a death shock, and I have no expectation of escape. You see my name publicly exposed by the side of that scoundrel's name; he dares to proclaim that I carry on a trade of friendship with him, and the public will believe it. I inform you, that it is an infernal and outrageous machination, but it will terminate soon—the measure is now overflowing, I shall fall in the struggle;" and overcoming his customary apathy, Mr. Pipelet seized the portrait of Cabrion and rushed for the door.

"Where are you going, Alfred?"

"To the police. I shall tear down that infamous sign, and with it in one hand and the portrait in the other, I shall proceed to the police to enter my complaint; I shall say to the magistrate, 'Defend me, avenge me, deliver me from Cabrion.'"

"Well said, old beloved; stir yourself, shake yourself; if you cannot remove the sign, tell the wine-dealer to assist you, and to lend you his ladder. If I had that scoundrel of a Cabrion, I would fry him in my pan; there are people beheaded who have not deserved the punishment as much as he does. I should like to see him on the scaffold, the miserable reprobate!"

Alfred gave proof, under the present circumstances, of a sublime forbearance; in spite of the exciting causes of complaint which he had against his persecutor, he determined to show him some mercy.

"No, no," said he, "even if I could, I would not demand his head."

"As for me, I would; yes, go—go ahead," exclaimed Anastasia.

"No," said Alfred, "I do not wish for blood; but I have the right to demand the imprisonment for life of this malicious being: my repose demands it, my health requires it, the law must grant me that reparation: if not, I shall quit France, my belle France; that is what they will gain by it."

And Alfred, buried in his sorrows, left the lodge majestically, like one of those imposing beings in ancient story, under the ban of fate.

CHAPTER XIV. ..... CECILE.

Before admitting the reader to the conversation between the portière and Madam Seraphin, we must inform him that Anastasie, without having any suspicions of the notary's professions of extreme sanctity, censured, in unmeasured terms, his conduct toward Germain and Louise Morel; and she naturally included Madam Seraphin in the same ban of reprobation: but for reasons which we shall explain hereafter, the portière disguised her displeasure at the housekeeper, under an exterior of the greatest cordiality.

After condemning the outrageous conduct of Cabrion, Madam Seraphin opened her business.

"Look here, Madam Pipelet," she said, "what has become of Mr. Bradamanti? Last evening I wrote to him, but have received no reply; I came this morning to see him, and learned that he was not at home: I hope I shall be more fortunate on the present occasion."

Madam Pipelet affected great sorrow, and said:

"Alas! you are in no better luck this time."

"How?"

"Mr. Bradamanti has not yet returned."

"That is intolerable."

"It must be a botheration, my dear Madam Seraphin."

"I have so many things to tell him."

"It seems as if fate was against you."

"Besides, I have to invent pretexts to come here; for if Mr. Ferrand knew that I was acquainted with a quack, you can imagine, how a man as pious and scrupulous as he is, would treat me."

"Just so with Alfred; he is so particular and so silly, that he is frightened every day."

"And do you know when Mr. Bradamanti will come in?"

"He promised to meet somebody at six or seven o'clock this evening, for he told me to tell the person he expected, to call again if he should not happen to be in. If you will call in the course of the evening, you will be sure to find him;" and Anastasia added in her own mind, "yes, by that time, he will be on his way to Normandy."

"I will then return this evening," said Madam Seraphin, in a disappointed tone; "I have something in addition to tell you, my dear Madam Pipelet; you know what has happened to that wretch Louise, whom every one thought so exceedingly well-behaved."

"Don't mention it," said Madam Pipelet, elevating her eyes in virtuous abhorrence; "it makes my hair stand on end to think of it."

"We are then without any servant at present, and if you happen to hear of any girl with a good character, who is honest and industrious, I hope you will be kind enough to send her to me. Good servants are very difficult to find now-a-days, and I have to make inquiries upon every side."

"If I hear of any one, Madam Seraphin, be sure I will let you know of it; good places are as rare as good servants;" and again, she added mentally, "I suppose she will starve to death in your shanty; your master is so stingy and so savage—to denounce upon the same day, Germain and Louise Morel."

"It is not necessary for me to tell you how quiet our house is. It is a great benefit to a young girl to have a situation there; and that Louise must have been desperately wicked, to turn out as she did, after all the good advice which Mr. Ferrand gave her."

"It must have been so, indeed. You may rely upon it, if I hear of any young girl, such as you desire, I will send her immediately."

"I have a word more to say. Mr. Ferrand desires that the servant should have no connections: for then she would have no excuse for going out, and fewer opportunities to ruin herself; so that if an orphan girl could be found, Mr. Ferrand would prefer her. In the first place it would be a charitable action, and in the next place, having no pretext for going out, she would

not be exposed to so many temptations. The fate of Louise has been a solemn warning to Mr. Ferrand, I assure you, Madam Pipelet; and it is that misfortune which renders it so difficult to suit him with a servant: such a scandal in a house as sanctimonious as ours! Well, well; I will come back this evening, and as I pass up to Mr. Bradamanti's room, I will call on Mother Burette."

"Good afternoon, Madam Seraphin. You will find Mr. Bradamanti this evening, you may be assured."

Madam Seraphin departed.

"What in the world is she continually running after Mr. Bradamanti for?" said Madam Pipelet to herself; "and he is determined not to see her before his departure for Normandy. I was very much afraid she would not go before the lady came that Mr. Bradamanti is expecting this evening. When she came here yesterday, I could not see her very well; but now I will try as much to see her face as I did that of the lady who came to see the tuppenny Commander; he has never returned here since, and I intend to burn up the wood of the silly coxcomb. Go ahead with your miserable twelve francs, and your glow-worm dressing-gown; it did you much good. But who can this lady of Mr. Bradamanti's be? is she of a high or low rank? I should like to know, for I am as curious as a magpie; it is not my fault, for I was made so. He must look out for himself, since he knows my temper. I have now an idea, and a famous one to find out the name of that lady. But who is this coming? Ah! it is my tenant, my king of tenants. Good afternoon, Mr. Rodolphe," said Madam Pipelet, in a military attitude, with the back of her left hand raised to her periwig.

It was in fact Rodolphe, who was as yet ignorant of the death of the Marquis d'Harville.

"Good day, Madam Pipelet. Is Mademoiselle Rigolette at home? I have something to say to her."

"She? the dear little kitten! is she not always at home, at her work? does she ever have a holiday?"

"And how is the wife of Morel? has she recovered her courage?"

"Yes, Mr. Rodolphe: she and her children, thanks to you or to their benefactor whose agent you are, now are perfectly happy, like fishes in water they have fire, air, water, good beds, excellent food, and a nurse to take care of them; saying nothing of Mademoiselle Rigolette, who, while working like a little beaver, without making any noise, don't lose sight of them, I can tell you; and then, on your part, a negro physician has been to see Morel's wife. Ha, ha! do tell me, Mr. Rodolphe! I said to myself, 'this must be the physician made for coal-heavers, for he can feel of their pulse without soiling his hands.' But, never mind! the color is nothing; he seems to be a famous doctor, for he gave some drink to Morel's wife, which seemed to revive her instantly."

"Poor woman! she must be very sad."

"Oh, yes! Mr. Rodolphe; how can it be otherwise? her husband crazy and Louise in prison. The misfortune of her daughter is that which breaks her heart; for an honest family it is a terrible blow. And, now I think of it, Mother Seraphin, the housekeeper of the notary, was here but a few moments since, and speaking abominable words about the poor girl. If there hadn't been a gudgeon which I wished Mother Seraphin to swallow, I should not have let it pass in that manner; but I kept dark for a moment on purpose. Did she not have the impudence to ask me, if I knew of any young girl who would take the place of Louise, at the house of that old coon of a notary! Is he not as cunning as he is stingy? He wishes an orphan-girl for a servant, if one can be found. Do you know why, Mr. Rodolphe? They pretend that, because an orphan has no relations, she would have no excuse for going out and exposing herself to temptation: but that is not the reason. The fact is, they wish to catch a poor girl without any friends, that they may cheat her out of her wages. Is it not so, Mr. Rodolphe?"

"Yes, yes;" he replied, with a thoughtful air.

Rodolphe foresaw, in this application of Madam Seraphin for an orphan-girl to supply the place of Louise, an almost certain means of inflicting upon the notary the punishment which he had designed. While Madam Pipelet was talking, he was arranging the plan of which he had designed Cecile as the principal instrument, in order to inflict a deserved retribution upon the tormentor of Louise Morel.

"I was very certain you would agree with me," said Madam Pipelet. "Yes, I repeat it; yes, they desire an orphan for no other reason than to cheat her; and I would rather suffer martyrdom, than send them any one. I don't know of anybody, but if I did, I would prevent them from going to such a shanty, with all my strength; and I should act right, should I not, Mr. Rodolphe?"

"Madam Pipelet, may I hope that you will confer a great favor upon me?"

"Speak, speak! Mr. Rodolphe. What is it? Shall I throw myself into the fire? curl my periwig with boiling oil? Shall I bite somebody? Speak; I will be anything for your service. My heart and myself are both your slaves. I will do anything for you that is consistent with fidelity to Alfred."

"Be quiet, Madam Pipelet. I have a young orphan to place in a situation. She is a stranger in Paris; she never was here before. I should like to have her take service with Mr. Ferrand."

"You smother me! What? go to that old shanty? live with that stingy dog?"

"Yes: it is all that; but still it is a situation. And if the young girl of whom I speak, does not like it, she can leave the house afterward. But she will at least find a way of earning her living, and I shall not be troubled on her account."

"Well, well, Mr. Rodolphe, it is your own business. You are informed about the character of the house; and if, notwithstanding, you like the place, I have nothing to say. Besides, I must be just to the notary. If there are things against him, there are things in his favor. He is a miserly dog, obstinate as a donkey, pious as a sexton; but he is as honest a man as ever lived. He gives small wages, but he pays them punctually; the food is miserable, but it is the same every day. In short, it is a house where one must work like a horse; but where there is small risk of a girl's going astray. The case of Louise was an exception."

"Madam Pipelet, I am about to confide a secret to your honor."

"Upon the word of Anastasia Pipelet, born Galimard: as true as there is but one God in Heaven: or as true as that Alfred wears none but green coats, I promise and vow to be as silent as a fish."

"You must not speak of it to Mr. Pipelet."

"I swear it on the head of my old beloved; if the matter is an honest one."

"Ah! Madam Pipelet."

"Well, then: we can stuff him with any story that we please. He never shall know anything about it; he is a perfect baby in innocence and simplicity."

"I have confidence in you, Madam Pipelet, therefore hear me."

"It is between us for life and death. Proceed, my king of tenants."

"The young girl I mention, has committed a fault."

"I understand: had I not at the age of fifteen married Alfred, I should have committed scores of follies; nay, hundreds. I was always just as you see me now; quick as saltpetre, upon my word. Fortunately, the virtue of Mr. Pipelet has extinguished my warmth, or I might have been guilty of innumerable follies. All this is to show that if the young girl has only committed one fault, there is great hope for her yet."

"I believe it myself. She was a servant in Germany, in the family of one of my relatives; the son of that relative was the partner of her guilt. Do you understand?"

"Go ahead! To be sure I do: as if I never committed a fault myself!"

"The mother turned the servant into the street, but the young man was foolish enough to leave his father's house, and bring the girl with him to Paris."

"It is just like young people."

"When the hour of reflection came, which was increased in bitterness by the fact that he had but little money, he applied to me, and I promised to furnish him with enough to return to his father, provided he would forsake the girl, and that I would attempt to find her a place.

"I could have done no more for my own son, if I had had one."

"I am delighted with your approbation. But as the young girl has no one to be responsible for her, and is also a stranger, it is somewhat difficult to provide for her a place. If you would inform Madam Seraphin, that one of your relatives, who is settled in Germany, had recommended to you this girl, perhaps the notary would receive her into his family. I should be doubly satisfied, for Cecile—that is her name—who has only wandered, would certainly improve in her conduct, in a house so devout as that of the notary. That is the reason why I wish her to enter into service with Mr. Jacques Ferrand. It is unnecessary for me to state, that being presented by a person of your respectable character——"

"Oh! Mr. Rodolphe."

"So estimable."

"My king of tenants!"

"That the young lady, in short, recommended by you, would certainly be accepted by Madam Seraphin, whereas, if she was presented by me——"

"All this I understand: it would be the same as if I introduced a young man. Very well: all right! it suits me perfectly—go ahead! You are in for it, old Mother Seraphin, and I'm glad of it, for I've a pique against you. I will answer to you for the affair, Mr. Rodolphe; I will make her see stars at noon. I'll tell her, that I don't know for how long that I have had a cousin established in Germany, by the name of Galimard; that I have just received the news that she is defunct, as well as her husband; and that their daughter, who is an orphan, will be left one of these days upon my hands."

"Very well: you will yourself conduct Cecile to Mr. Ferrand's, without saying one word more to Madam Seraphin, for as it is twenty years since you have seen your relatives, you will have no answer to make to their questions, except that since their departure for Germany, you have heard nothing of them."

"But what if the girl speaks nothing but German?"

"She speaks French perfectly well. I will give her the instructions which will be necessary, and there will be no need of your giving yourself any trouble, except to recommend her in very strong terms to Madam Seraphin; or, the thought now occurs to me, that it will not be the best to press her very urgently upon them, for sometimes, to entreat a favor, is the very way to be refused."

"Do you say that to me? That is the very reason why I have always mistrusted flatterers. If they ask me nothing? I do not say—but——"

"That is always the case. Do not, therefore, make any proposition to Madam Seraphin, but watch her well. Say only, that Cecile is an orphan, very young, quite pretty; that she will be a heavy burden upon you; that you have for her but little affection, because you quarrelled with your cousin, and that you do not thank her much for the present which she has made to you."

"Good gracious, how cunning you are! But be easy, there is a pair of us: we understand each other perfectly. If you had only been of my age, at the time of my life of which I just spoke, who knows——"

"Hush! Mr. Pipelet!"

"Poor man! he does not think of such trifles. If you only knew the last atrocity of Cabrion—but I will tell you of it at some other time. As for the young girl, you need give yourself no uneasiness about her; I'll bet I'll make old Mother Seraphin beg me to place my cousin in her house."

"If you succeed, Madam Pipelet, I will give you a hundred francs. I am not rich, but——"

"Are you jesting, Mr. Rodolphe? do you think I do this act out of mercenary motives? No! 'tis out of pure friendship."

"But you must consider, that if I have this young girl upon my hands for five months, it would cost me much more than that sum."

"If it will render you a service, Mr. Rodolphe, I will accept the hundred francs. But it is a famous prize in the lottery to have you in the house. I shall proclaim it from the roof that you are the king of tenants. Hallo! a hack! it must be the little lady of Mr. Bradamanti. She called yesterday. I did not get much of a glimpse of her; but now I will be slow in my answers, so as to see her thoroughly. I have also found out a plan for learning her name. You will see me work it, in a manner that will amuse you."

"No, no, Madam Pipelet: I care nothing for the name or the face of the lady," said Rodolphe, going back to the extremity of the lodge.

"Madam!" exclaimed Anastasia, rushing forward to meet the person who was entering; "where are you going, madam?"

"I am going to see Mr. Bradamanti," said the lady, perceptibly annoyed at the interruption.

"He is not at home."

"It is impossible! I was to meet him here."

"He is not in."

"You are mistaken."

"I am not at all mistaken," said the portiere, placing herself skillfully in such a position as to command a view of the individual's features. "Mr. Bradamanti is out, certainly out, except for one lady."

"Well, then, I am that lady. You vex me: let me pass on."

"Your name, madam; and I shall know whether you are the lady Mr. Bradamanti expects. If you are not the person, you will have to go over my body before you can pass up stairs."

"Did he tell you my name?" asked the lady, with great surprise and anxiety.

"Yes, madam."

"What impudence!" muttered the stranger; and after a moment's hesitation, she added impatiently, in a low voice, as if she feared being overheard, "My name, madam, is the Countess d'Orbigny."

Rodolphe shuddered: it was the name of the Marchioness d'Harville's step-mother. Instead of any longer remaining in the dark, he moved forward; and, by the combined light of the lamp and the day, easily recognized the peculiar face which Clemence had described.

"Countess d'Orbigny," repeated Madam Pipelet; "that is the name which Mr. Bradamanti told me. You may go up."

And Anastasia added, in a triumphant tone, as she returned to the lodge: "Go ahead—she is in for it! I know her name: 't is d'Orbigny. Not a bad contrivance of mine: what do you think of it, Mr. Rodolphe? But what ails you? have you fallen into a brown study?"

"Has the lady been here once already to see Mr. Bradamanti?" asked Rodolphe.

"Yes; last evening. And as soon as she departed, Mr. Bradamanti went out, to engage probably a seat in the diligence for to-day. When he returned, he asked me to take his trunk to the office, for he would not trust with it that little scoundrel of a Tortillard."

"And do you know where Mr. Bradamanti is going?"

"To Normandy, by the way of Alençon." Rodolphe remembered that Aubiers, the estate of the Count d'Orbigny, was situated in Normandy, and he was convinced that the quack was going there for some infamous design.

"The departure of Mr. Bradamanti will disturb mother Seraphin greatly. She is crazy to see him, and the doctor wished to avoid her, for he urged me strongly to conceal from her that he intended to start at six o'clock this evening, so that when she comes back, she will find no one at home. I will improve the opportunity to speak to her about the young girl. By the way, what is her name?"

"Cecile."

"It is as if one should say, Cecil, and put an e on to the end. Never mind; I must put a piece of paper into my snuff-box, in order to remember the name. Ceci—Ceci—Cecile. I have got it."

"Now, I will go and see Mademoiselle Rigolette," said Rodolphe, departing from the lodge; and with his mind absorbed with the purport of the visit of the Countess d'Orbigny to Polidori, he ascended to Rigolette's room.

CHAPTER XV.....RIGOLETTE'S FIRST SORROW.

The chamber of Rigolette displayed, as usual, its excessive neatness and order; the large silver watch, placed upon the mantelpiece in a box-wood stand, was indicating four o'clock; the severity of the cold having subsided, the economical mistress of the apartment had not deemed a fire in the stove at all necessary. A small space of blue sky could be with difficulty discerned, through an irregular mass of garrets, chimneys, and roofs, which bounded the prospect upon the opposite side of the street. All at once, a wandering ray of the sun, as if it had strayed from its usual path, wound around the roofs of the tall houses, and colored with dazzling purple the windows of the young girl. Near this window, Rigolette was seated at work. Her charming profile was relieved against the brilliancy of the glasses, like a pink cameo upon a red ground. Rays of light glanced upon her raven tresses, twisted behind her head, and tinged with an amber hue her industrious fingers, which plied the needle with such incomparable skill and dexterity. The long folds of her brown dress, on which the green apron was seen, fell partly over the rushes of her fauteuil, and her two little feet, always irreproachably shod, were supported upon a stool before her. As a rich Seigneur, sometimes in a fit of caprice, amuses himself with hanging with splendid draperies, the rude walls of a hovel; in the same manner, the brilliant rays of the setting sun, illumined with a thousand variegated lights, the little room of the grisette, converting the Persian curtains of gray and green, into cloth of gold, polishing with unwonted lustre, the walnut furniture, and adorning, with golden wire, the cages of her birds. But in spite of this addition to the cheerfulness of the apartment, the two canaries fluttered about in an unusual state of disquietude, and contrary to their usual habit, their tiny throats were closed; the melodious voice of their mistress was also hushed. Not one of the three would warble without the other. Rigolette's matin song generally aroused that of her birds, which did not wake so early. Then commenced a conflict between clear, ringing, round, melodious, and silvery sounds, in which the birds had not invariably the advantage. Rigolette sang no more, because for the first time in her life, the barb of sorrow had touched her bosom.

The sight of the Morels' misery had often affected her; but such pictures are too familiar to the poorer classes, to produce any abiding impression. After having daily administered to the relief of these distressed beings; after shedding her tears over their misery, the young girl was at the same time afflicted and comforted: Afflicted at the sight of their misery—comforted in affording it relief. It was not sorrow. The native cheerfulness of her spirit soon recovered its ascendency, not from any want of sensibility, but because she was unable to resist the enlivening tendency of the comforts with which she was herself surrounded, contrasted with the wretched garret of the Morels. There was so little of selfishness in the aptitude of Rigolette to impression, that a train of reasoning, of touching delicacy, had induced the grisette to regard it as her special duty, to assist those who were more reduced than herself, that she might enjoy, without any scruple or hesitation, the comforts of her precarious and laborious existence; but which was a luxurious style of living, compared with the frightful wretchedness of the lapidary.

"To sing without remorse, when your neighbors are miserable, you must have done all in your power to relieve them," was the naive sentiment of the excellent grisette.

Before informing the reader respecting the cause of Rigolette's first sorrow, we wish completely to relieve any suspicions he may have as to the perfect rectitude and virtue of Rigolette. We regret to be compelled to use that grave, pompous, solemn word *virtue*, which always seems to carry with it any idea of painful sacrifices, of severe struggles against vice, and austere reflections upon the design of things here below. Such was not the virtue of Rigolette; she had neither studied nor reflected; she was a laughing, singing, busy being. The exact propriety of her conduct, as she had informed Rodolphe, was due principally to the fact, that she never had *time* to fall in love. Cheerfulness, industry, order, gayety, had defended, sustained, and, unknown to herself, had saved her. The moral worth of such a character may be regarded as of trifling value; but who cares for the cause, so long as the effect exists? Who cares in which direction the roots of a plant run, provided its foliage is pure, luxuriant, beautiful and fragrant?

In speaking of utopias, or the encouragements which society should extend to poor and humble artisans, eminent for their integrity and social elevation, we alluded to an *espionage* over virtue, as one of the projects of the Emperor. Let us suppose the mighty idea of that great mind carried into actual operation. Suppose one of the exemplary philanthropists, commissioned by him to search after excellence, should discover Rigolette. Abandoned without any means of sustenance, with no friendly lips to counsel her, exposed to all the dangers of poverty, to all the temptations which the path of youth and beauty is beset—the untainted purity of the charming girl, which had triumphed over so many dangers; her industry, which none of the allurements of ease and indulgence could overcome; her rectitude, which had survived every temptation, would be an illustrious example and an instructive lesson. Would she not deserve, not merely a passing alms or a trifling reward, but some touching words of approbation and encouragement, which would give to her the consciousness of her own worth, which would elevate her in her own estimation, which would exert a binding power upon her for the future! She will be sensible that she is watched with an eye of solicitude and sympathy, in the dangerous path which she treads with so much courage and serenity. She will be sustained by the knowledge, that if the want of work, or sickness, shall threaten to cut short that busy life, which depends entirely upon labor, that some trifling aid, due to her past merits, will be granted her.

People will doubtless cavil at the difficulty of subjecting the deserving to this protecting care.

It seems to me that this problem has been already solved.

Has not society created a rigid *surveillance* of police from time to time, which is very useful in controlling those who are notorious for their detestable life of turpitude? Why should not society also exercise a surveillance for the purposes of exalted charity?

But let us quit these high utopian speculations, and return to the cause of the first sorrow of Rigolette. With the exception of Germain, who was an upright and sedate youth, the other neighbors of the grisette had mistaken her characteristic familiarity and neighborly kindness for significant hints; but they had been compelled to admit, with as much surprise as chagrin, that they could only find in Rigolette an interesting and cheerful companion in their moments of leisure, and a serviceable neighbor. Their disappointment, however, soon yielded to the charming humor and gayety of the grisette; and, as she had very truly remarked to Rodolphe, her neighbors were proud to have their arm taken on Sundays by a beautiful girl, who was an honor to them in many respects, and who was not half so expensive as their ordinary amusements, while her presence and gentility were worth double the price. Besides, the affectionate girl was so easily contented, that on those days when money was not very plenty, she would dine cheerfully upon a hard crumpet, which she would masticate with all the strength of her small white teeth, and would afterward promenade on the boulevards or in the streets.

If our readers feel any sympathy with Rigolette, they will agree, that it would have been both foolish and cruel to have refused, at least once a week, the humble demands of so kind a creature; and who, having no right to be jealous, never prevented her companions from consoling themselves for her severity, with beauties that were kindlier disposed. François Germain alone had never founded a foolish hope upon the familiarity of the young girl. Either from a pure instinct or native delicacy, he saw from the first day all that there was agreeable in the society which Rigolette offered him. What was destined to happen, actually took place: Germain fell desperately in love with his neighbor, without daring to breathe one word respecting it. Far from imitating his predecessors, who, when convinced of the folly of their expectations, resorted to other sources of solace, without losing their regard for their neighbor, Germain had delightfully enjoyed his intimacy with the young girl, and the pleasure afforded by her society on Sundays and every other evening that he was disengaged. During these long hours, Rigolette was always gay and merry, and Germain affectionate, serious, and attentive, and often slightly melancholy. This sadness was his only disadvantage, for his manners, being naturally refined, did not suffer by comparison with the ridiculous pretensions of Mr. Girandeau, the travelling clerk, or with the boisterous eccentricities of Cabrion; but Girandeau, by his excessive loquacity, and the painter, by his no less excessive hilarity, had the advantage of Germain, whose gentlemanly gravity rather awed his lively neighbor.

Rigolette had never, even until this period, evinced any partiality for either of her three lovers; but with an excellent judgment, she soon discovered that Germain combined all the qualities which would render any reasonable woman happy.

With these observations, we will now state why Rigolette was sorrowful, and why neither she nor her birds sang. Her full and blooming face was somewhat pale, her large black eyes, usually sparkling with fun and with life, were now slightly shaded; her features indicated unusual fatigue; she had toiled the greater part of the preceding night. From time to time she cast a sorrowful glance upon a letter, which lay open upon the table near her, which letter had just been addressed to her by Germain, and contained what follows:

GERMAIN'S LETTER TO RIGOLETTE.

Prison of the Conciergerie.

Mademoiselle,—That I write from this place is sufficient to inform you of the extent of my misfortune. I am imprisoned as a thief. I am culpable in the eyes of all the world, and yet I dare write to you!

Were I to believe that you regarded me as criminal and degraded, my lot would indeed be a terrible one. I pray you not to condemn me until you have read this letter. If you do, this last blow will crush me for ever.

Listen to my tale.

I have not been residing, for some time back, in the rue du Temple; but I learned through poor Louise that the Morel family, in which you and I are so deeply interested, has endured misery upon misery. Alas! my pity for these poor people has ruined me! I do not repeat of it, but I deplore the cruel fate which brings me here.

Yesterday I remained to a late hour at the house of Mr. Ferrand, busied with some writings which were to be finished in haste. There was a bureau in the room where I wrote, and in this bureau my employer was in the habit of locking up his daily work. On this evening he seemed unquiet and agitated; he said to me,—"You are not to go away until these documents are finished; you will put them into the bureau; here is the key." With these words he departed.

My work being finished, I opened the drawer for the purpose of locking it up there. My eyes mechanically rested upon an open letter, in which I read the name of Jerome Morel, the lapidary.

Seeing that the contents were aimed against this unfortunate man, I confess I had the imprudence to read the letter from beginning to end! I thus found that on the morrow the artisan was to be arrested for a bill of exchange involving one thousand three hundred francs, on behalf of Mr. Ferrand, who, under an assumed name, made him prisoner.

This warrant proceeded from my employer's agent. I knew the situation of the Morel family well enough to perceive what a terrible shock they would sustain by the imprisonment of their sole support. My grief was as great as my indignation. Unfortunately, I observed in the same drawer an open box, containing gold to the amount of two thousand francs. At this moment I heard Louise going up stairs; without reflecting on the grave nature of my crime, and profiting by the opportunity which chance offered me, I took one thousand three hundred francs. Waiting for Louise in the passage, I brought her the money in my hand, saying: "To-morrow your father is to be arrested at an early hour, for the sum of one thousand three hundred francs: take this; save him; but beware against telling that the money was given you by me. Mr. Ferrand is a villain."

You see, Mademoiselle, my intention was good, but my conduct was guilty. I conceal nothing from you. Now hear my excuse.

By a long course of economy I had realized and deposited with a banker the sum of fifteen hundred francs. Eight days were to elapse before the arrival of the term contained in the bond; and then the funds were to be at my disposal, provided I did not wish to let them remain with him.

I really possessed, therefore, more than I took from the notary. I might have had my fifteen hundred francs next day, but the banker's cashier did not arrive at his employer's house until noon, and Morel was to be arrested at dawn of day. I was obliged, then, to take this money, in order to make the payment in time: otherwise, although I might, indeed, procure his liberation, yet in the eyes of his wife he would have been degraded by arrest, and this last blow would kill her. Besides, the lapidary would still have been compelled to pay the expense of his arrest; and this was a considerable sum. You comprehend, do you not? Would not all these calamities have been brought on, if I had not taken the the thirteen hundred francs, which I believed myself able to replace in the bureau next morning, before Mr. Ferrand could miss them? Unhappily, I was deceived!

I left Mr. Ferrand's house, no longer disturbed by indignation or affected piety. I reflected entirely on the danger of my position: then a thousand fears came across me. I knew the notary's severity; he might, after my departure, return to examine his bureau and observe the theft; for in his eyes, and in the eyes of all, *it is a theft*.

These ideas deprived me of self-command. Although it was late, I ran to the banker's to beseech him to give me my money without a moment's delay. I shall explain the motive, thought I, for this extraordinary demand; I shall return immediately to Mr. Ferrand's and replace the money.

The banker, by a fatal chance, was gone for two days to Belleville, to a country-house which he was surrounding with plantations. I waited for the day with increasing anguish; at length I arrived at Belleville. Everything conspired against me; the banker had just returned to Paris. I run thither; I obtained my money; I present myself at Mr. Ferrand's: all is discovered!

But this is only one part of my misfortunes; the notary now accuses me of having stolen *fifteen* thousand francs in bank-bills, which were, says he, in the drawer of the bureau with the *two* thousand franks in gold. This is a false accusation; an infamous lie! I confess myself guilty of the first appropriation, but by all that in the world is sacred, I swear to you, Mademoiselle, that I am innocent of the second. I did not see a single bank-bill in the drawer. He had only two thousand francs in gold, of which I took thirteen hundred.

Such is the truth, Mademoiselle: I am under a heavy accusation, and yet I affirm that you ought to believe me incapable of lying. But do you really place confidence in me? Alas! as Mr. Ferrand said to me, "He who has stolen a small sum can steal a greater, and his word deserves no confidence."

I have always observed that you are kind and devoted to the unhappy, Rigolette; and I know you to be so candid and so true, that you will follow the best dictates of your heart, and appreciate, I hope, the truth of my statements. I ask nothing more. Believe me, and you will find as much in my lot to pity, as you will find in my conduct to blame; for, I repeat it, my intention was good; I have been ruined by circumstances which it was impossible to foresee.

Ah! Rigolette, I am very wretched. If you could know what sort of people surround me, and in what sort of company I am compelled to live until my trial, you would indeed compassionate my case.

Yesterday, I was conducted into a place called the depot of the prefecture of police. I have no words to describe to you what I saw on ascending a dark stair. I arrived before an iron gate, which was opened to receive me, and shut immediately after my admission. I was so confused, that at first I did not distinguish anything. A warm, disagreeable air blew into my face, I heard a great noise of voices, mingled here and there with ominous laughter, angry words, and vulgar songs. I remained at the gate motionless, contemplating the horrible menagerie before me, daring neither to advance nor to raise my eyes, and believing that the eyes of the whole world were fixed upon me. But they, in truth, took no notice of me. All sorts of prisoners, small and great, were there huddled together; I dared at length to raise my head. Heaven! what fearful figures! what rags! what filth! All the marks of misery and vice were there. There were forty or fifty seated, some on settees, some on benches built in the wall; vagabonds, thieves, assassins; in short, all who had been arrested in the night or during the day. When they observed me, I enjoyed a sad consolation in finding that they did not recognize me as one of themselves. Some looked at me with an insolent and contemptuous air; then they began to speak to one another in a low voice, and in a hideous dialect which I did not understand. By-and-by, the boldest among them came and struck me on the shoulder, demanding my money to pay for my introduction.

I gave him several pieces of money, hoping by this means to purchase repose. This did not satisfy them; they wished to take advantage of me: I resisted. Several heaped upon me threats and abuse. They all seemed disposed to fall upon me; then, fortunately, the jailer, attracted by the noise, came to my assistance. I complained to him. He obliged them to return me my money, and informed me that, if I wished, I should be conducted, for a moderate sum, to a place called the pistole, where I might enjoy the comfort of solitude. I accepted, with thanks, and left the bandits pouring forth threats for the future. "We shall find him again," said they. I left them.

The jailer led me to a cell, where I passed the rest of the night.

It is in that cell that I write to you this morning, Rigolette; soon, after being interrogated, I shall be conducted to another prison called La Force, where I am afraid I shall find several of my companions from the depot.

The jailer, moved by my misery and my tears, promised to carry this letter to you, although such a compliance with my wishes might perhaps subject him to severe punishment.

I am now about to ask, Rigolette, a last favor, for the sake of our long friendship, if indeed you do not now blush to acknowledge such a friendship. In case you should be disposed to accede to my request, here are my instructions:

You will receive with this letter a small key, and a word for the porter of the house in which I resided, boulevard St. Denis, No. 11. I wish to dispose of all my effects, and the porter will execute your orders. He will conduct you to my chamber. You will have the goodness to open my secretary with the key which I send you. You will find a large wrapper inclosing various papers, which I pray you to keep for me; one of them was intended for yourself, as you may see by the address. There are others which have been written concerning you, and in happier days. Do not be annoyed by them: you ought never to have seen them.

I also beg you to accept the small sum of money which is in this package, also the satin scarf, containing a little cravat of orange silk, which you wore at our last Sunday walks, and which you gave me when I left you in the rue du Temple. I wish, in short, that all my movables should be sold, with the exception of some linen, which you will send to La Force. Acquitted or condemned, I shall of course be disgraced, and obliged to leave Paris. Whither shall I go? What shall my resources be? God only knows.

Madame Bouvard, the merchant at the temple, who has already bought and sold several things for me, will take charge of the whole; this arrangement will spare you much embarrassment, for I know well that your time is valuable.

I have paid my rent in advance, and I beg you therefore merely to give a trifle to the porter. Pardon me, Rigolette, for troubling you with these details, but you are the only person in the world to whom I dare address myself.

I would have requested one of Mr. Ferrand's clerks to do me this service. I am intimate with him, but I can hardly trust his discretion with regard to certain papers, several of which refer to yourself, as I have told you; many others bear upon the sad events of my past life.

Ah! believe me, Rigolette, if you comply with my request, this last proof of your former affection will be my only consolation in the great calamity which weighs upon me; in spite of myself, I hope that you will not refuse me.

I also crave permission to write to you sometimes; it will be so refreshing to me, such a precious privilege to be able to pour

into a benevolent and warm heart the sadness which oppresses me.

Alas! I am alone in the world; no one takes an interest in me! This feeling was scarce tolerable formerly: judge what it must be now.

And yet I am honest, and I have the consciousness of never having injured a single individual; of having, always, even at the peril of my life, shown my hatred of that which is evil, as you may perceive by the papers which I request you to preserve, and which you may read. But when I shall tell this, who will believe me? Mr. Ferrand is respected by all the world; his reputation as an honest man has been long established; he has a just cause for reproaching me—he will crush me—and I resign myself beforehand to my lot. In short, Rigolette, if you believe me, you will have, I hope, no contempt for me; you will pity me, and you will sometimes think of your sincere friend; and if I am sometimes a source of very deep sorrow to you, perhaps you will extend your generosity so far as to come some day, some Sunday—alas! what recollections this word brings up!—perhaps you will come some Sunday and speak to me at my prison.

But no! no! *you* see me again in such a place! Yet you are good that——

I am obliged to interrupt this letter, and to send it away, unfinished as it is, with the key, and the small note for the porter, which I proceed to write, in haste. The jailor informs me that I am now to go before the judge. Do not drive me away with disdain: my only hope is in you—in you alone!

FRANCOIS GERMAIN.

P. S. If you reply, address your letter to the prison of la Force.

We now see the cause of Rigolette's first disappointment.

Her genuine heart was deeply moved by a misfortune of which, till then, she had not entertained the least idea. Without at all inquiring into the matter, she yielded entire credit to the story of Germain, the unfortunate son of the Schoolmaster.

Not very rigorous in her exactions, she found that her old neighbor exaggerated his crime enormously. To save the unhappy father of a family, he had taken a sum which he knew he could replace. Such an action, in the eyes of the grisette, was generous rather than criminal.

By one of those inconsistencies natural to women—above all, to women of her class—this young girl who, until then, had felt toward Germain only as she had felt toward her other neighbors, only the spirit of joyous and cordial friendship, now gave him a decided preference. As soon as she knew that he was unfortunate, unjustly accused and a prisoner, she forgot his former rivals.

With Rigolette this was not even yet love. It was an affection, lively, sincere, full of commiseration and determined devotion; a sentiment very new to her, especially as it was associated with the most melancholy thoughts.

Such was Rigolette's position, such were her ideas, when Rodolphe entered her chamber, after first discreetly knocking at her door.

CHAPTER XVI. ..... FRIENDSHIP.

"Good day, voisine," said Rodolphe to Rigolette. "I do not disturb you?"

"Not at all, voisin; on the contrary, I am very glad to see you, for I have been deeply grieved recently."

"Indeed! I find you pale; you appear to have been weeping?"

"I believe that I have wept; and it has not been without a cause. Poor Germain! Wait, listen!" and Rigolette handed to Rodolphe the prisoner's letter. "Oh! this is enough to stir the heart! You have told me that you are interested in him; now is the time to show it," added she, while Rodolphe listened attentively. "This villain, Mr. Ferrand, ought to be exposed before the world. Lately, he was the enemy of Louise; now he is plotting against Germain. Oh! I am not wicked, but if some calamity should happen to the notary, I would be contented! To accuse so honest a young man of having stolen fifteen thousand francs! Germain! him! One so honest, so mild, so sad! We cannot but pity him. Heavens! among all those wretches! in prison! Ah! Mr. Rodolphe, now I begin to see that everything in life is not rose-colored!"

"And what do you intend to do, voisine?"

"What do I mean to do? Of course all that Germain asks me to do; and that as soon as possible. I should already have been on my way, were it not for this work which must be finished, and which I am just about to carry to the rue Saint Honoré, as I go to Germain's room, to find the papers of which he speaks. I have passed part of the night in working, in order to gain a few hours. I have a great many things to do, besides my work, which must be done gradually; first, Madam Morel wishes me to see Louise, in her prison. This may, perhaps, be very difficult; nevertheless I shall attempt it. Unhappily, I know no one to whom I can make application."

"I have thought of that."

"You! my voisin?"

"Here is a note of permission."

"How happy! could you not procure me one to the prison of the unfortunate Germain? It would give him such pleasure."

"I shall give you the means of seeing Germain, also."

"Oh! thanks, Mr. Rodolphe."

"Will you not be afraid to go to the prison?"

"Certainly, my heart will beat very fast the first time; but it is no more than just. When Germain was happy, did I not find him always ready to meet all my wishes? To take me to the shows, or to walk? to read to me in the evening? to assist me in arranging my flowers, and in waxing my chamber? Well, now that he is in trouble, it is my turn. A poor little mouse like me cannot do much; I know it; but all that I *can* do, I *will* do: he may depend upon that. He shall see that I am his friend. Mr. Rodolphe, there is one thing that distresses me; it is his want of confidence in me; to believe me capable of treating him with contempt! Me! I ask you for what? This avaricious old notary accuses him of having stolen; what is that to me? I do not believe it. Does not Germain's letter prove clearly that he is innocent? I could not have believed him guilty. One needs only see and know him, to be satisfied that he is incapable of villainy. The man must be as wicked as Mr. Ferrand who believes such obvious falsehoods."

"Bravo! voisine; I am delighted to observe your indignation."

"Oh! I wish I were a man, that I might go to this notary, and say to him—'Ah! you maintain that Germain is a thief. Well, take that, you old liar! he will never steal that from you. There! there! there!' and I would beat him to a jelly!"

"You have a very expeditious method of obtaining justice," said Rodolphe, smiling at Rigolette's animation.

"It is really revolting to think of the old rascal; and, as Germain says in his letter, all the world will be in favor of his patron, and against him, because his patron is rich and respected, while Germain is only a poor, friendless young man. Unless you come to his assistance, Mr. Rodolphe, you who know so many benevolent persons—can nothing be done?"

"He must await his trial. Once acquitted, as I know he will be, numerous proofs of interest will be shown him, I assure you. But listen, my voisine; I know, by experience, that I can reckon upon your discretion."

"Oh! yes, Mr. Rodolphe, I have never been a tell-tale."

"Well, none must know anything about the matter, and Germain himself must not know that his friends are working in his behalf—for he has friends."

"Indeed?"

"Very powerful and devoted friends."

"Oh! it would give him so much courage to know it!"

"Doubtless; but perhaps he could not keep the secret. Then Mr. Ferrand, alarmed, would be on his guard, and as he is very adroit, it would be difficult to reach him. This would be provoking, for not only must Germain's innocence be proclaimed, but his calumniator must be unmasked."

"I understand you, Mr. Rodolphe."

"I may say the same with regard to Louise. I have brought you this note of permission to see her also, that you may beseech her not to reveal to a single individual what she related to me. She will understand what I mean."

"That is sufficient, Mr. Rodolphe."

"In a word, let Louise beware against complaining in her prison of her master's wickedness; this is very important. But she must conceal nothing from an advocate who will go at my request to consult with her about the defence; tell her to attend to all this particularly."

"Be easy, my voisin, I shall forget nothing—I have a good memory. But, speaking of goodness, it is you who are good and generous. When any one is in trouble, you find it out immediately."

"I have told you, voisine, that I am only a poor commission merchant; when I find, anywhere around me, deserving persons who require protection, I inform benevolent persons regarding them; they have confidence in me, and succor the unfortunate. That is the whole secret."

"And where do you lodge, now that you have given your room to Morel?"

"I lodge——"

"Oh! how I detest it! To live where all the world has lived, is as if all the world had been living with you"

"I am there only at night, and then——"

"I understand that is less disagreeable, Mr. Rodolphe. My companion renders me so happy. I have settled down in a life of tranquillity, and I did not dream that I could ever be unhappy; still you see! No, I cannot express to you the shock which Germain's misfortune occasioned me. It's true I have seen the Morels and others who have suffered greatly: but misery is misery; poor people must expect it; it does not take them by surprise, and they help one another as they can. It happens to one to-day, to-morrow to another. With gayety and a good heart one manages to rub on. But to see a good and honest young man, who has been one's friend so long, to see him accused of theft, and lodged in prison pell-mell with robbers! Oh! Mr. Rodolphe, I have not strength to bear up against that: that is a misfortune which I had never thought of; it overcomes me quite.

And Rigolette's large eyes were drowned in tears.

"Courage, courage! your gayety will return when your friend is acquitted."

"Oh! there can be no doubt that he will be acquitted—he will only have to read to the judges the letter which he wrote to me; that will be quite enough—will it not, Mr. Rodolphe?"

"Doubtless; that simple and touching letter has every character of truth about it; you must let me take a copy of it; it is necessary to Germain's defence."

"Certainly, Mr. Rodolphe. If my writing were not so horrible a scrawl, notwithstanding the lessons Germain gave me, I would offer to copy it—but my writing is so coarse, so crooked, and then I should make so many, many mistakes."

"I will ask you to trust me with the letter only till to-morrow."

"There it is, my voisin; but you will take great care of it, will you not? I burned all the love letters which Mr. Cabrion and Mr. Girandeau used to write me at the beginning of our acquaintance, with doves and flaming hearts painted at the top of the page, when they thought I should listen to their nonsense; but this letter, from poor Germain, I shall take great care of, and any other too which he may write to me. Besides that, his asking me those little services is a proof in my favor. Is it not, Mr. Rodolphe?"

"Without doubt: it proves you are the best little friend in the world. But, now I think of it, instead of your going alone to Germain's, would it not be better that I should accompany you?"

"With pleasure, my good voisin. It is getting dark, and I would rather not be running about the streets alone; besides which, I must carry home some work to a house near the Palais Royal. But it would, perhaps, fatigue and inconmmode you to go so far."

"Not at all: we will take a hackney coach."

"Really! Oh! if I were not so low spirited, how pleased I should be to ride in a coach. And I must truly be low spirited, for this is the first day, since I have been here, that I have passed without singing. My birds are quite struck dumb with it—poor little things; they can't think what it means. *Father Cretu* sang two or three times, to entice me on. I tried a little, but it was useless. In about a minute I began to cry again: *Ramouette* then began; but I could not get out a note."

"*Father Cretu? Ramouette?* What curious names you have given your birds."

"My birds, d'ye see, Mr. Rodolphe, are the charm of my solitude. They are my best friends. I gave them the names of the good people who rendered my childhood so happy, and who were also my best friends; and, in order to finish the comparison, Father Cretu and Ramouette were always gay, and sang as merrily as the birds of heaven."

"Ah! yes, now I recollect; these are the names of the good people who adopted you."

"Yes, voisin. I know it is ridiculous to give such names to birds, but that is my affair. But this is another circumstance which proves that Germain has an excellent heart."

"In what way?"

"I will tell you: Both Mr. Girandeau and Mr. Cabrion—and Mr. Cabrion particularly—were always joking me about the names I had given my birds. To call a canary Father Cretu—only think! Mr. Cabrion could not comprehend it; and then he would teaze me about it for an hour together. 'If it were a cock,' said he, 'then it would be all very well to call it Cretu. And then you call the hen Ramouette; that puts one in mind of *ramoneur*' (a chimney sweep.) At last I got so out of humor with him, that for two Sundays I would not walk out with him, to teach him better manners; and I told him, very seriously, that if he began his jokes again, which annoyed me very much, I would never again keep company with him."

"What a courageous resolution!"

"It vexed me very much, I can tell you, Mr. Rodolphe; I, who looked forward to my Sunday walks with such pleasure: my heart swelled almost to bursting, to be obliged to remain at home, alone—and such fine weather, too! But never mind: I preferred rather to sacrifice my Sundays, than to hear Mr. Cabrion mocking those I respected. After that, had it not been for the remembrance I attached to them, I should have preferred calling my birds by other names. See, now, Mr. Rodolphe: there was one name that I should have delighted in—that of *Cobivie*. Well; I did not do so, because I will never call any birds I have by other names than *Cretu* and *Ramouette*, for it would seem to me that I was forgetting, was sacrificing, my adopted parents. Don't you think so, Mr. Rodolphe?"

"You are right—perfectly right. But Germain? he did not make a joke of these names, did he?"

"On the contrary—excepting the first time that he heard them, when, like everybody else, he thought them very droll: that was very natural; but when I explained my reasons for so calling them—and I had explained them, also, to Mr. Cabrion—tears came into his eyes. From that day I said to myself, 'Mr. Germain has a good heart: what a pity 't is that he should be so sad.' What bad luck it has brought me, Mr. Rodolphe, to have reproached him for his gloom. I could not then comprehend why any one should be sad. But now my parcel is made up—my work ready to carry home. Will you give me my shawl, voisin? It is n't cold enough to put on a cloak, is it?"

"We shall take a coach; and I will bring you home again."

"Ah! that 's true: we shall go there and return so much the quicker." It will be so much time saved."

"But, now I think of it, how will you manage? With these visits to the prison, your work will get behindhand."

"Not at all; not at all: I have made my calculation. First, I have my Sundays free: I will then go and see Louise and Germain. It will be a walk, and during the walk, I will go once or twice to the prison. Each of these visits will take me about three hours; will it not? Well; in order to earn enough to make me comfortable, I will work an hour longer every day. Instead of going to bed at eleven, I will sit up till twelve o'clock. This will be a clear gain of the seven or eight hours a week, which I shall lose in seeing Louise and Germain. You see I am richer than I appeared to be," added Rigolette, smiling.

"But do you not fear that you will fatigue yourself too much?"

"Bah! I shall soon get used to it. Use is everything. And then, it cannot last for ever."

"Here's your shawl, voisine—I will not be so indiscreet as I was yesterday, my lips shall not come so near your charming neck."

"Ah! voisin, yesterday we might laugh—but to-day, it is quite another thing—take care you do not prick me."

"There, now—the pin is crooked."

"Well! take another, you will find one on the pin-cushion Ah! I had forgotten, will you be very obliging, voisin?"

"Command me, voisine."

"Make me a good pen, very broad-nibbed—that on my return I may write to that poor Germain and tell him his commissions are executed. He will have my letter early to-morrow morning: it will be a treat for him when he wakes."

"Where are your pens?"

"There, on the table; the pen-knife is in the draw—stop a moment, I will light a candle, for it is getting dark!"

"I should not be well able to mend your pen without it."

"Right, and then I have to tie on my cap."

Rigolette, took a lucifer match, and lit a wax candle which was standing in a brightly polished little candlestick.

"The deuce! a wax candle, voisine? what extravagance!"

"The little that I burn may cost a very trifle more than tallow candles, but it is so much cleaner."

"A very trifle more, do you say?"

"Certainly! I buy these wax candle ends by the pound, and half a pound lasts me a month."

"But," said Rodolphe, carefully mending a pen, while the grisette tied on her cap before a looking-glass, "I do not see that you have made any preparations for dinner?"

"I am not in the least hungry. I took a cup of milk this morning—I shall take another to night, with a little bread, and that will be quite enough for me."

"Perhaps when we return from Germain's house, you will without ceremony come and dine with me."

"I thank you, voisin, but my heart is too full; another time I will, with pleasure—I'll tell you when it shall be—the evening before Germain is to come out of prison. I invite myself, and after dinner you shall take me to the theatre. Shall it be so?"

"Agreed; and believe me, voisine, I will not forget the engagement. But why refuse me to-day?"

"Why, Mr. Rodolphe, I should be such stupid company for you, and besides it would take up too much time. I ought not to

be idle at such a moment as this, nor lose a quarter of an hour improperly."

"Well, then, I give up all hope for to-day."

"Stay—take my parcel, voisin; go before and I will lock the door."

"Here is a capital pen; now give me your parcel."

"Take care not to tumble it—it is *poult de soie*, and it will crease; hold it in your hand—there, so—lightly—that's right. Now go on, I will light you down stairs."

Rodolphe then descended the stairs, preceded by Rigolette.

At the moment the two neighbors were passing before the porter's lodge, they saw Mr. Pipelet, who, with outstretched arms was advancing toward them from the end of the alley. In one hand he held the sign-board, which announced that he was entering into *friendly business* with Cabrion; in the other, the portrait of the wicked painter.

Alfred's despair was so overpowering, that his chin fell upon his chest, and all that was to be seen of him was, the immense crown of his drum-like hat.

Seeing him advance in this manner with his head down toward Rodolphe and Rigolette, he might have been mistaken for a ram, or a brave Breton champion preparing for the combat.

Anastasia quickly presented herself at the door of her lodge, and on seeing her husband, cried out: "Well, old dear, you have got back! what did the commissary say to you? But take care, Alfred, you are poking against my king of lodgers—who is it that has put your eyes out? Pardon, Mr. Rodolphe—it is that rascal Cabrion, who stupefies him more and more; he will, as sure as fate, make quite an ass of him—poor old beloved! Alfred! why don't you speak, then?"

On hearing this voice, so dear to his heart, Mr. Pipelet raised his head: his features were impressed with gloomy irony.

"What did the commissary say to you?" rejoined Anastasia.

"Anastasia, we must gather together the little we possess, press our friends to our hearts, pack up our trunks, and expatriate ourselves—from France—my lovely France! for being now certain of impunity, the monster is capable of pursuing me everywhere."

"How! the commissary?"

"The commissary!" shouted Mr. Pipelet with violent indignation, "the commissary!—he laughed in my face."

"Laughed in your face? A man of your age, with so respectable an air that you would appear as stupid as a goose, if your virtues were not well known."

"Well! notwithstanding all that, after I had respectfully laid before him the accumulated mass of injuries and wrongs inflicted upon me by that infernal Cabrion—this magistrate having looked for a while at my justificatory documents, the sign-board and the portrait I had taken with me, laughing all the while—yes, I say laughing, and I will even venture emphatically to affirm, laughing indecently, replied, 'My good man, this Cabrion seems to be a regular scape-grace, a knave who is fond of practical jokes: pay no attention to his tricks. I very seriously advise you merely to laugh at them, for really, they are worthy of it.' 'Laugh at them, sir?" cried I, 'laugh at them! while I am devoured by vexation—while this wretch embitters my existence? He will drive me mad! I demand that he be forthwith imprisoned—that he be exiled, at all events, from our street.' At these words the commissary smiled, and most obligingly showed me the door—I comprehended the full force of this gesture of the magistrate, and here I am.'"

"Magistrate of nothing at all!" cried Madam Pipelet.

"All is over, my Anastasia—all is over now; even hope has abandoned me; justice and France are strangers: I am atrociously sacrificed!" and, by way of peroration, Mr. Pipelet pitched the sign-board and the portrait to the farther end of the alley.

Rodolphe and Rigolette had, in the shade, smiled a little at the despair of Mr. Pipelet.

After having addressed a few words of consolation to Alfred, whom Anastasia was doing her best to pacify, the *king of tenants* quitted the house in the rue du Temple, with Rigolette, and they both got into a coach and went to François Germain's house.

CHAPTER XVII. ...THE WILL.

Francois Germain lived at No. 11 on the boulevard St. Denis. We will remind our readers, who have no doubt forgotten it, that Madame Mathieu, the diamond broker, lodged in the same house.

During the long time consumed in going from the rue du Temple to the rue St. Honoré—where the dress-maker lived, to whom Rigolette wished in the first place to deliver her work—Rodolphe had the opportunity of appreciating still further the excellent disposition of the young girl. Like all instinctively good and devoted characters, she had no perception of the delicacy and generosity of her conductor, which appeared to her perfectly natural. Nothing could have been more easy to Rodolphe than to have liberally secured the present and future comfort of Rigolette, and thus have given her the opportunity of going charitably to console Louise and Germaine, without being obliged to calculate the *time* which these visits kept her from work, her only resource; but the Prince feared to lessen the merit due to the devoted friendship of the grisette, by rendering her task more easy—having, at the same time, determined upon rewarding the rare and charming qualities he had discovered in her, he wished to follow to its close this new and interesting trial.

It is hardly necessary to say that, in the event of the young girl's health being in the slightest degree impaired by the increase of work she had so courageously imposed upon herself, in order to consecrate a few hours every week to the daughter of the lapidary and the son of the Schoolmaster, Rodolphe would have instantly hastened to assist his protege.

It was with feelings of delight and wonder that he studied a character so naturally happy, and so little prone to sorrow, that even under present affliction a ray of liveliness would every now and then break forth.

In about an hour after leaving the rue St. Honoré, the coach stopped before a small but decent looking house on the boulevard St. Denis.

Rodolphe assisted Rigolette to alight: she then went into the porter's lodge and told him of Germain's intentions, not forgetting the present he had promised him. Thanks to his amiability of character, the Schoolmaster's son was beloved by every body. Mr. Pipelet's brother porter was alarmed, on being apprised that the house was about to lose so good and quiet a lodger—such were his expressions.

The grisette having borrowed a light, rejoined her companion; the porter was to follow shortly after to receive her further instructions.

Germain's room was on the fourth story. When they reached the door, Rigolette said to Rodolphe, giving him the key, "Take this, voisin, and open the door, for my hand trembles so much. I know you will laugh at me; but when I think that Germain will perhaps never return here, it appears to me that I am entering the chamber of the dead."

"Do not let such ideas afflict you, voisine; you should have more sense."

"I know that I am wrong, but I cannot help it;" and she wiped away a tear.

Without being so much moved as his companion, Rodolphe nevertheless experienced a painful feeling on entering this modest retreat.

Knowing with what detestable pertinacity the accomplices of the Schoolmaster had beset, and pursued, and perhaps still continued to pursue Germain, he felt that the unfortunate young man must have passed many unhappy hours in the solitude of this chamber.

Rigolette placed the light upon the table. Nothing could be plainer than the furniture of the room. It consisted of a cot, a chest of drawers, a walnut secretary, four straw chairs, a table, and white cotton curtains before the windows and the alcove; the only ornament upon the chimney-piece was a water bottle and a glass.

From the bed being pressed down without being in a state of disorder, it was apparent that Germain must have thrown himself upon it, without taking off his clothes, during the night that preceded his arrest.

"Poor boy!" said Rigolette, sorrowfully, examining with interest everything about the room; "it is easy to perceive that I am no longer his neighbor. It is orderly, but it is not neat and clean; everything is full of dust; the curtains are smoked, the windows are dirty, the floor is not waxed. What a difference! in the rue du Temple the room is not handsomer, but it is much more lively, because everything is cleanly and shiny, as in mine."

"That was because you were there, to give him your advice."

"But only see!" cried Rigolette, pointing to the cot; "he did not go to bed the other night, he was so agitated. And look at this handkerchief, which he has left—it has been wet through with tears; one can easily see that;" and taking it, she added, "Germain kept a little orange-colored silk cravat of mine, which I gave him when we were happy; I will keep this handkerchief in remembrance of his misfortunes. I am sure he will not be angry that I do so."

"On the contrary, this proof of your affection will much please him."

"But now let us think of more important matters. I will presently make a parcel of the linen I shall find in the drawers, which I will carry with me to the prison. To-morrow, I will send Madam Bouvard here, and she will arrange the rest. I will,

first of all, however, open the secretary, and take out the papers and money, which Germain begs me to take care of for him."

"Now I recollect," said Rodolphe, "Louise Morel gave me, yesterday, the thirteen hundred francs in gold which she received from Germain, to settle her father's debt, which I had paid before. I have that money: it belongs to Germain, as he has repaid the notary. I will give it to you, and you will add it to that which you are to keep for him."

"As you please, Mr. Rodolphe. I should, however, rather not have so large a sum of money at my lodgings; there are so many thieves about. The papers no one would think of stealing; there is no fear for them; but money—it might be dangerous."

"You are perhaps right, my good voisine; shall I take care of it? Should Germain be in want of anything, you can let me know it instantly. I will leave you my address, and I can send you what he may require."

"Thanks, voisin; I should not have dared to ask you to render us that service. That will be much better; and I will give you whatever the furniture may sell for. Now let us see these papers," said the young girl, opening several drawers. "Ah! here they are, most probably. Here is a large packet. Oh, Heavens! look here, Mr. Rodolphe! How melancholy it makes one to see what he has written here!" and she read with much emotion:

"In the event of my dying by violent means, or otherwise, I beg the person who may open this secretary, to carry these papers to Mademoiselle Rigolette, seamstress, No. 17, rue du Temple."

"May I break the seal of this envelope, Mr. Rodolphe?"

"Certainly; for has not Germain informed you, that among these papers is a letter particularly addressed to you?"

Rigolette broke the seal. It inclosed several written papers: one of them bore this superscription: "*To Mademoiselle Rigolette,*" and contained these words:

"Mademoiselle, when you read this letter, I shall have ceased to exist. If, as I fear, I die by violent means, from falling into an ambuscade like that I barely escaped from, the information contained in the paper on which is written, '*Notes on my Life,*' may perhaps afford some clue by which my assassins——"

"Ah! Mr Rodolphe," exclaimed Rigolette, discontinuing to read; "I am no longer surprised at his being so gloomy. Poor Germain! always tormented by such horrible ideas."

"Yes, he must have been much afflicted; but, believe me, his worst days are past"

"Alas! I pray it may be so, Mr. Rodolphe; but to be in prison, accused of theft!"

"Be quieted: his innocence once acknowledged, instead of falling back into seclusion, he will find friends; first, yourself, and then a well-beloved mother, from whom he has been separated since his infancy."

"His mother! has he still a mother?"

"Yes: she thought him lost to her. Conceive her joy when he shall be restored to her, absolved from the unworthy accusation which has been brought against him. Was I not right in saying that his worst days were past? Do not speak to him of his mother. I confide this secret to you because you interest yourself so generously for Germain, and your devotion to him merits that you should be relieved from all anxiety as to his future fate."

"I thank you, Mr. Rodolphe; you need not fear my discretion. I will keep your secret."

And Rigolette continued reading Germain's letter:

"If you will have the goodness, Mademoiselle, to cast your eye over these notes, you will see that my whole life has been very unhappy, except during the time I passed in the house with you. You will find written out at length, in a sort of memorandum, entitled '*My Only Days of Happiness,*' that which I never should have had the courage to tell you in words.

"Almost every evening when I left your society, I thus gave vent to the feelings of consolation which your affection gave to me, and which alone alleviated the bitterness of my life. That feeling, which in you was merely friendship, was love to me. I have ever concealed my love from you, until the present moment, when I can be no more to you than a subject of regret. My destiny has been so unhappy, that I should never even, had it not been for this, have spoken to you of this feeling. Although sincere and deeply-seated, it might have brought misfortune upon you. I have yet one more wish to point out to you, and I hope that you will carry it out. I have observed with what admirable courage you labor, and how much prudence and management you require in order to live upon the humble salary which you earn with so much toil. Often, without telling you of it, I have trembled at the idea that some illness, brought on, perchance, by the excess of labor, might at any time reduce you to a situation, of which I could not even think without shuddering. It has been a sweet thought to me that I could rescue you in a great degree from those torments, and perhaps from other miseries also, of which your careless youth hath as yet, happily for you, taken no note."

"What does he mean, Mr. Rodolphe?" cried Rigolette, astonished.

"Proceed, and we shall see."

Rigolette then resumed her reading:

"I well know on how small means you live, and of what vast aid to you the smallest sum would be in times of difficulty. I am myself very poor; but by dint of economy I have laid by fifteen hundred francs, which are lodged in the hands of a banker. These are all my possessions. By my will, which you will find enclosed, permit me to leave them to you Accept them as a legacy from a friend, from a dear brother, who is now no more."

"Ah! Mr. Rodolphe," said Rigolette, bursting into tears, and giving the letter to the Prince; "this pains me too deeply. This excellent Germain, to occupy himself thus with my prospects. Ah! what a heart he has! Heavens! what a feeling heart!"

"Noble and brave young man," cried Rodolphe, with emotion; "but calm yourself, my child. God be praised, Germain is not dead; this will in anticipation, will have answered the purpose of showing us how much he has loved you—how much he loves you still."

"And then to think, Mr. Rodolphe, that I should never even have suspected," replied Rigolette, wiping away her tears. "From the beginning of our being neighbors, Mr. Girandeau and Mr. Cabrion were always talking to me about their burning passion, as they called it; but seeing that that led to nothing, they got out of the habit of talking about such things to me. Mr. Germain, on the contrary, never once spoke of love. When I proposed to him that we should be good friends, he accepted my offer frankly; and, since then, we have lived as true comrades. And yet, and yet—certainly I may confess to you—I was not exactly vexed that Mr. Germain had never told me that he was in love with me."

"And yet you were a little—surprised, shall I say?"

"Well, yes, Mr. Rodolphe; I thought it was his melancholy which caused him to act thus."

"And in fact you wished that he had had a little less of this melancholy?"

"It was his only fault," answered the grisette, with infinite simplicity; "but now I excuse it. I am even angry with myself for having reproached him with it in my own mind."

"In the first place, because you know that, unfortunately, he had much cause to be melancholy," replied Rodolphe, with a smile; "and in the second, because you have now proof positive that, in spite of this melancholy, he was in love with you."

"It is true—to be loved by so fine a young man—that is most flattering to the heart; is it not, Mr. Rodolphe?"

"And, perhaps, you will one day share his affection?"

"Gracious! Mr. Rodolphe, it is very tempting. This poor Germain is very much to be pitied. I put myself in his place: if, at the moment when I supposed myself abandoned and despised by all the world, one person, a true friend, approached me more kindly, more tenderly than I fancied was possible, I should be very happy." After a moment's silence, Rigolette continued, with a smile, "On the other hand, we are so poor, both of us, that this would be hardly reasonable. Hold, Mr. Rodolphe, I will not think of this. Perhaps I am mistaken: one thing is certain, however, that I will do all I can for Germain, while he remains in prison. Once at liberty, it will be time enough to consider whether it is love or friendship that I feel for him. Then, if it should be love, what would you have, my voisin? It will be love. Up to that point it will trouble me to know where to find myself. But it is growing late, Mr. Rodolphe; will you get these papers together, while I go and make up a parcel of linen? Ah! I was forgetting the scent-bag, that contains the orange-colored handkerchief I gave him. Doubtless it is in this drawer. Ah! here it is. Oh! see how pretty it is, this little perfumed bag! and all embroidered, too! Poor Germain! he has kept it like a relic, this little handkerchief. I recollect well the last time when I put it on, and when I gave it to him. He was glad—so glad!"

At this moment, some one knocked at the door of the room

"Who is there?" said Rodolphe.

"Some one who wishes to speak with Madam Matthieu," answered a thin, hoarse voice, with the accent peculiar to the lowest order of the people. Madam Mathieu was the brokeress in diamonds of whom we have spoken.

This voice, accentuated singularly, excited some vague recollections in the mind of Rodolphe. Wishing to relieve them, he took the light, and went himself to open the door.

He found himself face to face with one of the regular customers of the *tapis-franc* of the ogress, whom he recognized on the spot;

so clearly was the fatal stamp of vice imprinted on that juvenile and beardless countenance. It was Barbillon.

Barbillon, the disguised driver of the hackney-coach, who had taken the Schoolmaster and Chouette to the hollow road, near Bouqueval; the assassin of the husband of the miserable milk-woman, who had instigated the farm-laborers of Arnouville against Goualeuse.

Whether the wretch had forgotten the features of Rodolphe, which he had seen but once at the *tapis-franc* of the ogress; whether the alteration of the costume prevented him from recognizing *the conqueror of Chourineur*, he manifested no astonishment at his appearance.

"What do you wish?" said Rodolphe.

"It is a letter for Madam Mathieu: can I deliver it to her in person?" answered Barbillon.

"She does not live here," replied Rodolphe. "Inquire at the opposite door."

"I thank you, sir; they told me the door on the left, but I made a mistake."

Rodolphe did not remember the name of the brokeress in diamonds, which Morel, the lapidary, had only mentioned to him two or three times. He had thus no particular reason to feel any interest in the woman to whom Barbillon had come with this message. Nevertheless, although he was ignorant of the crimes of this bandit, his face bore the impress of so much villainy, that he waited for a moment on the threshold of his door, to see the person to whom Barbillon had brought this letter.

Scarcely had Barbillon knocked at the door which faced that of Gennain, when it was opened, and the diamond-brokeress, a stout woman of about fifty years, appeared at it, holding a candle in her hand.

"Madam Mathieu?" said Barbillon.

"'Tis I, my boy."

"Here is a letter: I am to wait an answer."

And Barbillon moved forward a step, to enter her apartment; but she made him a sign to stay where he was; unsealed the letter, holding it to the light of the flambeau, read it, and answered him with a well-pleased expression:

"You will say, that it is all right, my boy. I will bring what is required. I will go at the same hour as the last time. Many thanks," said the old woman.

"Yes, my good woman. Don't forget the messenger."

"Go and ask those who sent you. They are richer than I." And with the words the brokeress shut the door.

Rodolphe entered the room of Germain, seeing Barbillon going rapidly down the staircase.

The brigand met, on the boulevard, a man of low and savage aspect, who was waiting for him before a shop.

Although several persons might have heard him—without understanding him, it is true—Barbillon appeared so much delighted, that he could not refrain from saying to his companion:

"Come,' said he, speaking in the slang of the bandits; "come and drink some brandy, Nicholas. The old woman has fallen into the trap with a vengeance! She will come to the house of Chouette. Mother Martial will help us to take the jewels from her by force, and afterward we will carry off the *stiff 'un* in your boat."

"Let us make haste, then; I must be at Asnières in good time. I am afraid that my brother Martial suspects something."

And the two bandits, after having held this conversation—utterly unintelligible to any who might have overheard them—took their way toward the rue St. Denis.

Some moments afterward, Rigolette and Rodolphe left Germain's apartment, entered a hackney-coach, and arrived at the rue du Temple.

The hackney-coach stopped.

At the moment when the gate was opened, Rodolphe recognized, by the light of Rigolette's lamp, his faithful Murph, who was waiting for him at the entrance of the alley.

"What is the matter?" Rodolphe asked him hastily, while Rigolette was removing several parcels from the carriage.

"A great misfortune has happened, my lord."

"Speak! in the name of Heaven!"

"The Marquis d'Harville——"

"You terrify me!——"

"He was giving, this morning, a great breakfast to several of his friends—everything had passed off admirably—he, in particular, had never been so lively—when a fatal imprudence——"

"Go on! go on! I beg you!"

"Playing with a pistol, which he did not know to be loaded——"

"He wounded himself dreadfully?"

"My lord!——"

"What more?"

"Something more dreadful yet!——"

"What do you say?"

"He is dead!"

"D'Harville! Ah! this is frightful," exclaimed Rodolphe, with an accent so piercing, that Rigolette, who was just stepping out of the hackney-coach with her parcels, said—

"Heavens! what is the matter with you, Mr. Rodolphe?

"Some dreadful news that I have this moment announced to my friend, mademoiselle," replied Murph; for the Prince was so completely overcome, that he was unable to make any answer.

"Is it a great misfortune?" asked Rigolette, trembling as she spoke.

"A very great misfortune," replied the squire.

"Ah! this is too dreadful," said Rodolphe, after a silence of some minutes; and then, remembering the presence of Rigolette, he said:

"Pardon me, my good child, that I do not accompany you. I will send you my direction, and an order which will admit you to the prison of Germain."

"Ah! Mr. Rodolphe, I assure you that I participate deeply in the sorrow which has fallen on you. I thank you for having accompanied me—I shall see you again very soon, shall I not?"

"Yes, my good child, very soon."

"Good night, Mr. Rodolphe," said Rigolette very sadly, vanishing with the words into the alley, with the different articles which she was bringing away from Germain's apartment.

The Prince and Murph entered the hackney-coach, which carried them to the rue Plumet.

Rodolphe immediately wrote the following note to Clemence:

"Madame—I have this moment learned the unexpected blow which has befallen you, and robbed me of one of my best friends—I leave it to you to imagine my astonishment, my horror. It is, however, necessary, that I now trouble you with matters foreign to this cruel event. I have just learned that your stepmother, who has certainly been in Paris for some days, departs to-night for Normandy, taking along with her Polidori.

"My motive is to inform you of the danger to which your father is undoubtedly subjected. Permit me to give you some advice, which I believe to be salutary. After the frightful calamity of this morning, your leaving Paris for a little while, will be but too natural. Therefore, take my advice: set out, set out at once for Aubiers, in order to arrive there as soon as possible after your stepmother; at all events, at the same time with her. Be not alarmed: afar off, as close at hand, I ever watch over you—the abominable projects of your stepmother shall be unmasked and frustrated.

"Adieu, madam, I write these words to you in haste. My spirit is broken when I think of last evening, when I left *him*, more tranquil and more happy than I have seen him for many a day.

"Trust, madam, my deep and sincere devotion,

"RODOLPHE."

Pursuing the advice of the Prince, Madam d'Harville, three hours after having received this letter, was on her way for Normandy, with her father.

A post-chaise, starting from the hotel of Rodolphe, followed on the same route.

Unhappily, in the troubles produced by this complication of events, and by the hurry of her departure, Clemence forgot to inform the Prince, that she had met Fleur de Marie at St. Lazare.

It may perhaps, be remembered, that on the previous evening, Chouette had threatened Madam Seraphin to reveal the existence of Goualeuse; affirming that she knew—as she indeed really did—where that girl was to be found.

It may also be remembered, that after this interview, the notary, Jacques Ferrand, fearing the disclosure of his criminal proceedings, considered that he had a strong inducement to cause the disappearance of Goualeuse, whose existence, once recognized, might have compromised his safety.

He had written therefore to Bradamanti, one of his accomplices, to come and see him, in order to devise a new plot, of which Fleur de Marie should be the victim.

Bradamanti, engaged with interests so pressing as were those of the stepmother of Madam d'Harville, who had sinister reasons for carrying the charlatan with her to the house of Count d'Orbigny—Bradamanti, I say, unquestionably thinking that it would be more to his interest to serve his old friend, took no notice of the invitation of the notary, and set out for Normandy, without seeing Madam Seraphin.

The storm was on the point of bursting over the head of Jacques Ferrand. In the course of the same day, Chouette came to reiterate her threats; and, in order to prove that they were not vain, declared to the notary that the little girl formerly abandoned by Madam Seraphin, was at this moment a prisoner at St. Lazare,

under the name of Goualeuse; and that, if he did not give her ten thousand francs within three days, that young girl should receive papers, which would inform her that she had been intrusted in her childhood to the care of Jacques Ferrand.

According to his custom, he denied everything audaciously, and drove away Chouette from his door, as a lying impostor, although he was not only convinced of the truth of what she told him, but alarmed by the drift of her menaces. Thanks to his numerous associations, the notary was enabled the very same day, during the interview of Fleur de Marie with Madam d'Harville, to learn that Goualeuse was in truth a prisoner at St Lazare, and that her conduct having been singularly excellent, she was expected to receive her discharge at a moment's notice.

Strengthened with this information, having matured one of his diabolical plans, Jacques Ferrand perceived that the aid of Bradamanti was becoming more and more necessary to him for the execution of it, and thence the vain efforts of Madam Seraphin to obtain an interview with the charlatan.

Having learned that same evening the departure of the latter, the notary, compelled to act hastily by the imminence of his fears and his dangers, bethought himself of the Martials, that family of fresh-water pirates, dwelling near the bridge of Asnières, to whom Bradamanti had proposed to send Louise Morel, in order to get rid of her with impunity.

Being absolutely compelled to employ an accomplice in his atrocious designs against Fleur de Marie, the notary took the most shrewd precautions to avoid being himself compromised, in case a new crime should be committed; and the day following the departure of Bradamanti for Normandy, Madam Seraphin set out in haste for the house of Martial.

END OF PART THE FIFTH.

PART THE SIXTH.

CHAPTER I.....THE ISLE OF THE RAVAGEURS.

THE following scenes are to be understood as occurring on the evening of the day whereon, by the orders of Jacques Ferrand, Madam Seraphin visited the Martials, those fresh-water pirates, dwelling on the point of a little island near the bridge of Asnières.

Martial, the father of the family, perishing, as *his* father had before him, on the scaffold, had left a widow, four sons, and two daughters. The second of these sons was already condemned for life to the galleys. Of all this numerous family, there now remained at the Isle of the *Ravageur*—a name which all the country gave to this haunt, we shall presently show why—the widow Martial, with three sons, and two daughters. Of the sons, the eldest—the lover of Louve—was five-and-twenty years of age: the second twenty, and the youngest twelve. The two daughters were, one of eighteen, the other nine years of age. Instances of families like this, in which the awful inheritance of crime appears to be perpetual, are but too common.

This *must* be so! Let me repeat this fact for ever: society thinks only of *punishing*, never of *preventing* guilt. One criminal shall be sent to the galleys for life; another shall be decapitated. These convicts naturally leave young children: Will society take any heed of the condition of these orphans? of these orphans, *which it has made orphans!* by cutting off their father by a civil death if not by actual decapitation. Will it substitute a salutary and conservatory tutelage, in the default of his guardianship whom the law has pronounced infamous, incapable? in default of his guardianship whom the law has slain? No! *When the reptile is destroyed, its poison dies with it:* so says society. It is mistaken: the poison of corruption is so subtle, so corrosive, so contagious, that it becomes almost always hereditary; but if resisted in due season, it never will become incurable. Is this a fantastic contradiction? Does not ocular demonstration prove that a man has died of a transmissible disease? By means of careful preventives, his posterity shall be preserved from the affection to which he fell a victim. Surely the same means will produce the same effects in moral as in physical science.

Suppose it be demonstrated that a malefactor almost always bequeathes to his son the germ of precocious crime: Will society do that for the preservation of this young soul, which the physician does for the body, when he combats hereditary disease? No, it will not. Instead of curing that unhappy wretch, it will suffer him to putrify—to perish.

And then, as the people suppose that the son of the executioner must of consequence be an executioner—so will they suppose that the son of a felon must of consequence be a felon. In the next degree, I will consider a corruption caused by the selfishness of society, as the proof of a hereditary taint. So that, if in despite his fatal teaching, the orphan—whom the law has made an orphan—by chance, remains industrious and honest, a barbarous prejudice of mankind will cause the paternal blight to rest upon him. To complete his unmerited condemnation, he will scarce find work if he seek it. And instead of coming to his assistance, of saving him from discouragement, from despair, and above all, from the dangerous indignation against injustice, which sometimes drives the noblest spirits to rebellion, and to guilt, society will say: "If he turn out a rascal, we will take care of him. Have we not our jailers, our turnkeys, our executioners?"

Thus, for him who preserves his purity—an accident as rare as it is glorious—in spite the teachings of detestable example, there is no support, no encouragement. Thus, for him, who, plunged from his very birth into a hotbed of domestic depravity, is vitiated in his very youth, there is no hope of cure!

"Yes, yes! I will cure the orphan, whom I have made an orphan," says society; "but at my own time, in my own place—by my own method—sometime hereafter.

"To extirpate a cancer, to excise an imposthume, action must be had on the instant. A criminal calls for attention.

"The prisons and the galleys, these are my hospitals; in cases quite incurable, there is the guillotine. As for the preservation of my orphan, I will think about it by and by. But patience! I tell you, patience! Let the germ of hereditary corruption, which is now hatching in him, ripen—let it grow strong—let it extend its ravages deeply. Patience! then patience be it! When our man shall be rotten to the heart's core; when he shall sweat out crime through every pore; when a desperate theft or brutal murder have cast him on that bench of infamy, where his father sat before him: oh! then we will cure the inheritor of crime, as we cured the legator. At the galleys or on the scaffold, the son will find his father's place still warm for him."

Yes! in such circumstances, so reasons society. And then it is astonished, it is indignant; it is tempted to see transmissions of hereditary theft and murder handed down, generation after generation.

The object of the gloomy picture which comes next, *The fresh-water pirates*, is to show that there may be in a family hereditary successions of guilt, when society will not step in, either by legal or by voluntary aid, to shield *the wretched orphan by the law*, from the dread consequences of the doom thundered against their father.

The reader must pardon us for prefacing this new episode by an introduction. Here is the reason why we do so: In proportion as we advance with this publication, so furiously is its moral end attacked, and as we think, so unjustly, that we must be permitted to insist upon the serious and upright intention which has sustained and guided us thus far. Many grave, delicate, and exalted minds, have thought good to encourage our attempts, and to send us the flattering proofs of their advocacy of our views. We owe it, therefore, perhaps to these friends—both unknown and known—to answer once for all, these blind and obstinate criminations of our purpose, which have resounded even, we are told, in the chambers of the legislative assembly. To proclaim THE ODIOUS IMMORALITY of our work, is, as it seems to us, to proclaim implicitly the odiously immoral tendencies of those persons, who honor us with their lively sympathies.

It is in the name then, of those sympathies, as much as it is of our own, that we shall endeavor to prove by one example, chosen from among many, that this work is not entirely devoid of generous and practical ideas. In one of the earlier portions of the book, we gave a scheme of *a model farm*, founded by Rodolphe, *for the encouragement, instruction and reward, of poor and industrious cultivators*. To this proposition, we added the words:

"The industrious, but unfortunate poor, deserve at least as much attention as the criminal. Nevertheless, there are numerous societies for the patronage of young imprisoned or liberated convicts; while no society has yet been founded for the encouragement of the youthful poor, whose conduct has been always exemplary. So that it is actually necessary to have committed an offence, in order to gain admission to those institutions, otherwise so salutary and beneficial."

And we made a laborer at the farm of Bouqueval, speak thus: "It is humane and charitable, never to despair of reforming

the wicked, but the good also must be encouraged to hope. If an honest young man, healthy and laborious, having a disposition to learn, should present himself to that farm for reformed thieves, they would ask him, 'Have you ever stolen anything, and been a little of a vagabond?' 'No.' 'Well, then, there is no place for you here.'"

This discrepancy has also struck the minds of greater men than we: thanks to them for all of our Utopia which has been made real.

Under the patronage of one of the most eminent and honorable men of our times—the Count Portalis—and under the intelligent direction of a true philanthropist, with a generous heart united to an enlightened and practical mind—Mr. Allier—a society has been formed recently, for the purpose *of giving aid to poor and upright young persons of the department du Seine, and of employing them in agricultural colonies.* This single and simple approach to the realization of our views, is enough to prove the moral tenor of our work.

We are very proud, very happy, to have met the founders of this new work of philanthropy on a common basis of ideas, hopes, and aspirations; for we are one of the humblest, but of the most deeply-convinced, missionaries bent upon promulgating these two grand truths—that it is the duty of society to PREVENT CRIME, and to *encourage* and RECOMPENSE VIRTUE, as far as it is possible to do so.

Since we have spoken of this new work of charity, of which the just and moral intention must have a fruitful and salutary action, let us hope that its founders will think of filling up another gap, by extending hereafter their tutelary patronage, or at least their anxious attention, *to young children whose fathers shall have been put to death, or condemned to an infamous penalty amounting to civil death,* and who, we repeat it, ARE RENDERED ORPHANS BY THE VERY APPLICATION OF THE LAW. Such of those wretched children as shall be worthy of attention by their sound tendencies and by their misery, will deserve yet a more particular attention, owing to the fact that they are *exceptions,* under circumstances singularly painful, difficult, and dangerous. Yes! painful, difficult, and dangerous!

Let us go over it again. The family of a condemned criminal, almost always the victims of cruel prejudices, after seeking for work in vain, finds itself compelled, in order to escape general reprobation, to retire from places where it was wont to find the means of existence. Then, irritated and embittered by injustice, already reduced to the level of criminals, by the consequence of deeds of which they are innocent, sometimes having got through all honorable resources; these miserable wretches will be driven even to the brink of falling, although they may yet remain upright? Supposing, on the other hand, they have already been subjected to influences almost invariably corrupting, should we not try to save them, while there is yet time?

Moreover, the presence of these *orphans of the law* in the midst of those other children, chosen by the society of which we speak, would be for them, too, a useful teaching. It would show, that although the guilty one is inexorably dealt with, his kindred lose nothing, but gain rather, in the world's esteem, if, by dint of exertion, courage, and virtue, they succeed in raising up again to light a dishonored name.

Shall we say, that the legislature intended to render punishment more terrible, by virtually striking at the guilty father through the prospective doom of his innocent progeny?

That would be barbarous, immoral, senseless. Is it not, on the contrary, a noble truth to teach a people, that there is no necessity inherent in crime of its hereditary perpetuation? that the original taint is not indelible?

May we dare to hope, that these reflections may be thought worthy of some consideration by the new society of patronage?

Without doubt, it is lamentable to think that the State never takes the lead in these vital questions, which touch the very quick of social organization. And yet can it be otherwise?

In one of the latter legislative sessions, a petitioner, struck, as he said, by the misery and sufferings of the lower classes, proposed, among other means of remedying them, *the foundation of maisons d'invalides, destined for the reception of workers.* This project, unquestionably defective in form, but nevertheless embodying a high philanthropical idea, worthy of the most serious examination, inasmuch as it is connected with the vast question of organization of industry, *was received with prolonged and general shouts of laughter!*

So much premised, let us pass onward.

Let us return to the fresh-water pirates, and think of the *ravageur.*

The *ravageurs,* as well as the *debarcleurs* and *dechireurs* of boats, pass the day up to their waist in water, in the exercise of their trade.

The *debarcleurs* drag ashore drift timber.

The *dechireurs* demolish the rafts which bring down the timber—quite as aquatic as the others in their mode of laboring. The *ravageurs* have yet a different object in their labor.

Wading into the water, as far as he can go, the *ravageur* draws up the sand of the river into a vessel by means of a long rake; then gathering it into great wooden troughs, he washes it as a miner does his ore, or a gold-washer his precious sand, and thus collects from it great quantities of metallic fragments of all kinds; iron, copper, lead, and tin, produced from the great variety of utensils lost in the stream.

Oftentimes also, the *ravageurs* find in the sand fragments of gold, or silver trinkets, either from the sewers through which the streams disgorge themselves, or from the masses of ice and snow, collected in the streets and cast into the river, in the winter time.

Now the reader is aware, in consequence of what character and employment these laborers—who are for the most part honest, industrious, and inoffensive—have gained an appellation so terrific.

The elder Martial, who was the first inhabitant of the Isle, having been a *ravageur*—wretched employment!—the dwellers on the river bank christened it the *Isle of the Ravageur.*

The habitation of the fresh-water pirates, is situated at the southern end of this domain.

During the day passengers can read on a sign-board, swinging above the door:

> THE RENDEZVOUS FOR RAVAGEURS.
> Good wine, good
> Boats let out here for excursions.

It will be perceived, then, that to his other trades, whether open or concealed, the head of this accursed family added the occupations of tavern-keeper, fisherman, and lender of boats.

The widow of the executed man still kept the house; and thither resorted all sorts of people without occupation, vagabonds, exhibiters of wild beasts, travelling mountebanks, and the like, to hold their parties of pleasure on Sundays, and at other times, not holydays.

Martial, the lover of Louve, the eldest son of the family, and the least guilty of them all, was a poaching fisherman; and, when hard pushed, played the part of a real bravo, and for a certain remuneration, he took the part of the weak against the strong.

Another of the brothers, Nicholas, the destined accomplice of Barbillon in the murder of the diamond-broker, was outwardly a *ravageur,* but in reality a pirate on the waters of the Seine, and along the shores.

And, to conclude, Francois, the youngest son of the convict, rowed the guests to and fro, who wished to make excursions on the water; while as a memorandum, we will just mention Ambrose Martial, who had been condemned to the galleys for burglary and intent to murder.

The eldest daughter, nicknamed *Calebasse,* assisted her mother in the kitchen, and waited on the guests; her sister Armandine aiding in the like manner as far as she was able.

On this evening, the night was dark without; heavy, opaque, gray clouds, driving before the wind, now hid, now suffered to be seen athwart their fantastic rents, glimpses far—far beyond, of pure dark azure, studded with glittering stars.

The outline of the island, edged with tall, leafless poplars, was painted strongly in relief against the darkly luminous background of the nocturnal sky, and the gleamy transparence of the shaded river.

The house, built with irregular gables, was buried in complete obscurity; two windows only on the ground floor were lighted, and of these, the lattices blazed brightly, throwing long lines of ruddy lustre over the little wavelets which washed against the dock close to the house. The chains of the boats moored there, gave out, at times, a dull and ominous clank, which mingled mournfully with the wailing of the breeze in the poplars, and the dull rushing of the mighty river.

A portion of the family were assembled in the kitchen, a large low room, with two windows facing the door, and a long dresser beneath them; on the left, a tall chimney-piece; on the right, a staircase leading to the upper stories; beside the staircase, a doorway led into a large dining-room, with many tables for the frequenters of the tavern. The light of a lamp mingled with that of the fire upon the hearth, flamed upon many saucepans, and other utensils of copper, hanging in rows upon the walls, or arranged on shelves with different kinds of earthern-ware. A large table occupied the middle of this kitchen. The widow of the executed felon, surrounded by three of her children, was seated in the chimney-corner.

This woman, very tall and bony, appeared to be about forty-five years old. She was dressed all in black. A mourning handkerchief, knotted *en marmotte*, concealing all her hair, surrounded her flat and wrinkled forehead. Her nose was long, straight, and sharply pointed; her chin prominent; her cheeks hollow; her skin tawny, with its whole surface deeply pitted with the small-pox; the corners of her mouth always drawn down, rendered yet harder the expression of a face, cold, sinister, and impassible as a mask of marble; and to complete the picture, heavy gray eyebrows overshadowed eyes of a dim, rayless blue.

The widow of the felon was employed, like her daughters, in sewing. The eldest, tall and dry, was extremely like her mother. There was the same calm, hard, vicious face—the same thin nose—the same dry mouth—the same pallid glare of the blue eye—only her complexion, which was clayey and yellow as an orange, had gained her the nickname of *Calebasse*. She did not wear mourning; her gown was brownish; her cap of black web showed two bands of her hair, of a pale lustreless brown.

François, the youngest of the sons of Martial, squatted on a foot-stool, was taking up the broken meshes of an *aldret*, a very destructive kind of net, prohibited on the Seine under the heaviest penalties. Notwithstanding the sun-burnt tint which embrowned it, the complexion of this child was florid; a forest of red hair covered his head, his forehead was prominent, his eyes quick and piercing; he bore no resemblance to his mother, or to his elder sister; he had a dogged, yet timid air, and, from time to time cast, through the sort of shaggy mane which fell over his face, an oblique glance of defiance at his mother, or exchanged with his little sister a look full of affection and intelligence. She, seated by the side of her brother, was employed, not in marking, but in erasing the marks from some linen stolen the previous night. She was nine years old, and resembled her brother no less than her elder sister did her mother. Her features, without being regular, were less coarse than those of François; although full of freckles, her complexion was dazzling bright, her lips full and lustrous, her hair red, but fine, silky and brilliant; her eyes small but pure and soft.

When the eyes of Amandine met those of François, she pointed to the door; at this sign François answered by a sigh, then calling the attention of his sister by a rapid movement, he counted distinctly ten meshes with the point of his netting needle.

That sign was intended to convey to her, in the symbolic language of the children, that their brother Martial would not return until ten o'clock.

To look at the two women, with their silent manner and vicious looks, and the two poor little children, uneasy, taciturn, and timid, they would have been taken for two executioners and their victims. Calebasse, perceiving that Amandine had ceased working for a moment, said to her hashly, "Shall you have soon finished unmarking that chemise!"

The child dropped her head without answering, and, with her fingers and her scissors, hastily finished ripping out the threads which marked some letters on the linen.

In a few minutes Amandine timidly handed her work to the widow, saying, "Mother, I have finished it."

Without a word the widow cast her another piece of the linen. The child could not catch it in time, and it fell to the ground, when the elder sister struck her a smart blow on the arm with her heavy hand, crying out "little fool!"

Amandine returned to her seat and went actively to work, having exchanged with her brother a glance, her eyes yet full of tears. The same silence continued to reign in the kitchen.

Without, the wind whistled and shook the tavern sign. That mournful grinding, and the dull hissing of the pot which simmered on the fire, were the only sounds that were audible.

The two children watched with secret terror the silence of their mother. For, though she was habitually no talker, this absolute taciturnity, with a certain compression of her lips, showed them that the widow was in, what they called, one of *her white rages*—that is to say, a prey to a fierce and concentrated irritation.

The fire seemed about to go out for want of wood.

"François, a billet!" exclaimed Calebasse.

The young net-mender looked behind the corner of the chimney-piece, and answered: "There are no more there!"

"Go to the wood-pile!" answered Calebasse.

François muttered a few unintelligible words, and did not stir.

"Now—now, do you understand me, François?" said Calebasse, sharply.

The widow of the executed man laid down upon her knees a napkin which she too was unmarking, and glared on her son.

His head was cast down, but he seemed to *feel* the terrible gaze that was fixed upon him. Fearing to meet that hideous face, the child remained motionless.

"Well: are you deaf, François?" said Calebasse, angrily.

"You see, mother!"

The elder sister appeared to consider it her function to accuse the two children, and to call for the punishment which her mother so pitilessly inflicted.

Amandine, seeing the movement, jogged her brother's elbow gently, to induce him, without speaking, to obey Calebasse.

François stirred not. His elder sister looked at her mother, to demand his punishment. The widow understood her, and pointed with her long fleshless fingers to a stout, pliant willow rod, which stood in the chimney-corner. Calebasse leaned back, and reaching the instrument of punishment, placed it in the hands of her mother. François, who had observed every motion of his mother, leaped up suddenly, and got out of reach of the threatening wand.

"Do you wish my mother, then, to beat you to death?" cried Calebasse.

The widow, grasping the heavy stick, and contracting yet more her pale, thin lips, glared fixedly on François, without uttering a word: but by the slight trembling of the hands of Amandine, and the sudden redness which suffused the back of her neck as she stooped down her head, it was easy to perceive that the child, used to similar scenes, was terrified at the punishment which awaited her brother. He had taken refuge in the corner of the kitchen, and seemed at the same time terrified and angry.

"Beware! my mother is about to rise: you have no time to lose," said the elder sister.

"It is all one to me," said François, growing pale: "I had rather be beaten, even as I was night before last, than go to the wood-pile—and at night, too!"

"And why so?" asked Calebasse, impatiently.

"I am afraid at the wood-pile—I am!" replied the boy shuddering in spite of himself.

"You are afraid, little fool! and of what?"

François shook his head sulkily, without answering

"Will you speak? what are you afraid of!"

"I don't know; but I *am* afraid."

"You have been thither a hundred times—last night even!"

"All's one: I will go no more."

"My mother is rising!"

"So much the worse for me," screamed the child; "but she may beat me—she may *kill* me—but she cannot make me go to the wood-pile; and above all, at night!"

"But once more—why?" said Calebasse.

"Well, then, because——"

"Because what?"

"Because there is some one——"

"There is some one——well?"

"Buried there!" muttered François, shuddering.

Even the widow of the felon, despite her impassibility, could not command a quick sharp shiver, which ran through her. It seemed as if the two women had been shaken by the same electric shock.

"There is some one buried in the wood-pile?" asked Calebasse, shrugging up her shoulders.

"Yes," said François, in a voice so low that he could scarce be heard.

"Liar!" cried Calebasse.

"I tell you, that just now, when I was moving the wood in the dark corner of the wood-house, I saw the bone of a dead man sticking out of the ground, which was damp all around it," replied François.

"Do you understand, mother? is he not a fool?" said Calebasse, making a sign of mutual intelligence to the widow. "They are the mutton bones, which I put there for the lye."

"It was no mutton bone!" said the child, terrified; "they were bones buried there—bones of a dead man—a foot sticking out of the ground: I saw it very well."

"And I suppose you told all this fine discovery to your brother—to your good friend Martial, did you not?" asked Calebasse, with savage irony.

François replied nothing.

"Accursed little spy!" shrieked Calebasse, furiously. "Because he is as cowardly as a cow, he is quite capable of getting us all guillotined—as they guillotined my father!"—using the slang phrase.

"Since you call me a spy," said François, exasperated, "I will tell it all to my brother Martial. I had not told him, for I had not seen him since; but when he comes back this evening, I——"

The child dared not complete his sentence; for his mother rose and came toward him, calm, but inexorable. Although she had an habitual stoop, she was very tall for a woman. Holding

the stick in one hand, the widow seized her son by the other; and, despite his terror, his resistance, his tears, and his entreaties, dragging him after her, she forced him up the staircase at the end of the kitchen.

A moment afterward, on the floor above, the sound of cruel blows, mixed with loud screams and sobs, was heard distinctly. A few minutes afterward, the sound ceased.

A door was shut violently, and the widow of the felon came down the stairs again, calm and impassible as she went up; and placing the rod in its proper position, seated herself again beside the hearth, and went on with her sewing, not having uttered any word or sound whatever.

CHAPTER II. ..... THE FRESH-WATER PIRATES.

After a pause of a few moments, the widow of the executed man said to her daughter:

"Go after some wood; we will arrange the wood-pile this evening, after the return of Nicholas and Martial."

"Martial! do you wish to tell him that——"

"Bring some wood," said the widow, sharply, interrupting her daughter.

The girl, accustomed to bend before that iron will, lighted her lantern and went out.

The opening of the door revealed the darkness of the night; the tall poplars cracked in the wind; the chains attached to the boats clanked; the wind whistled, and a sort of moan came up from the waves of the river—sounds that were peculiarly sad and gloomy.

During the scene which we have described, Amandine, touched deeply by the fate of Francois, whom she had loved so affectionately, had neither dared to raise her eyes, nor wipe away the tears which dropped one by one upon her lap. She smothered her sobs, and tried even to restrain the palpitation of her heart. Tears obscured her vision. While she had hastened to pick the mark from the shirt which had been given her, she had wounded her fingers with her scissors: the cut bled, but the poor child thought less of the pain which she suffered, than of the punishment which would be inflicted upon her for soiling the linen committed to her charge. Fortunately, the widow, absorbed in her own reflections, did not perceive it.

Calebasse came in, bringing a basket full of wood, and replied to a glance of her mother by a nod of affirmation, intending to convey by it, that the foot of the dead man was above the ground.

The widow bit her lips, and continued to work, but she moved her needle more rapidly. Calebasse replenished the fire, watched the boiling of the kettle, and resumed her seat by the side of her mother.

"Nicholas does not arrive," she said; "I hope that the old woman who came here this morning and arranged an interview between him and Bradamanti, has not led him into any bad scrape. She looked very mysterious; she would neither tell her name, nor explain her business, nor tell where she came from;" and the widow shrugged her shoulders.

"Do you think that Nicholas is in any danger, mother? Perhaps you are right. The old woman asked him to be, at seven o'clock this evening, on the quay Billy, opposite the landing, and wait there for a man who wished to see him, and who would give 'Bradamanti,' as a pass-word. There can be no danger in all this. If Nicholas is late, the reason is that he has found something on the way, in the same manner that he did the night before last, when he *hooked* these clothes from the washing-boat." And she showed one of the pieces from which Amandine was removing the mark. She then addressed the child, and said: "What is meant by 'to hook?'"

"It means to take," said the child, without raising her eyes.

"It means to steal, little fool; do you hear? To steal."

"Yes, sister."

"And when one understands how to hook skillfully, like Nicholas, there is always something to be gained. The clothes which he stole yesterday, will be very serviceable to us, and will only cost the trouble of removing the marks. Is it not so, mother?" said Calebasse, laughing, and displaying a set of irregular teeth, as yellow as her complexion.

The widow did not respond to the joke.

"Speaking of furnishing our house gratis, we can perhaps find access to some other shop; you know that an old man has recently occupied the country-house of Mr. Griffon, the physician of the hospital of Paris, that stands alone, not a hundred paces from the river, opposite the plaster-kiln."

The widow cast down her head.

"Nicholas said, yesterday," continued Calebasse, "that perhaps there would be a good job in that house, and I found out this morning that there is some booty there. We must send Amandine to pry about the house; they will take no notice of her, she can pretend to be playing; she can examine everything thoroughly, and come and inform us what she has seen. Do you hear what I am saying?" added Calebasse harshly, addressing Amandine.

"Yes, sister, I will go," replied the child, trembling.

"You always say that you will do what is ordered, but in fact you do nothing, cunning one. The time when I told you to take one hundred sous from the drawer of the grocer at Asnières, while I kept him employed upon the other side of the shop, it was very easy to do; people don't suspect children: why did n't you do it?"

"My heart failed me, my sister, I did not dare to do it."

"The other day, you dared to steal a handkerchief from the bundle which the peddler was selling in the tavern; did he find it out, you little fool?"

"You compelled me to do it, sister; the handkerchief was for you, and, besides, it was not money."

"What is the difference?"

"To take a handkerchief is not so bad as to take money."

"Upon your word of honor, it is Martial who teaches you these scruples, is it not?" said Calebasse ironically. "You tell him of everything, you little spy! Do you think we are afraid that your Martial will eat us up?" And then addressing her mother, she said: "I tell you, mother, that it will turn out bad for him; he wishes to command here. Nicholas and myself are both mad with him; he excites Amandine and François against us, and against you: it cannot last long."

"No," said the mother, in a curt, sharp tone.

"Since Louve has been at Saint Lazare, he has behaved like a madman toward every body. Is it our fault that his mistress is in prison? When she gets out let her come here; I will punish her faithfully. She won't be so savage hereafter."

The widow, after a moment's reflection, said to her daughter:

"Do you think that something can be done with the old man that lives in the house of the physician?"

"Yes, mother."

"He looks like a beggar."

"For all that, he is a nobleman."

"A noble?"

"Yes; does he not carry gold in his purse—although he goes on foot to Paris, and returns in the same manner, with his large cane as his only carriage?"

"How do you know that he has gold?"

"This afternoon I went to the post-office of Asnières, to see if there were no letters for us from Toulon."

At these words, which reminded the widow of the imprisonment of her son in the bagnio, she wrinkled her brows and subdued a sigh.

Calebasse continued: "I was waiting my turn, when the old man that lives in the physician's house, entered. I knew him immediately by his beard, which is as white as his hair; by his sallow face, and his black eyebrows. He does not look very amiable, but with all his age, seems to be a determined old fellow. He asked the woman who keeps the office, 'whether there were any letters for the Count de Saint Remy, from Angers?' 'Yes,' she replied; 'there is one.' 'It is for me,' said he; 'here is my passport.' While the keeper of the office was examining it, the old man drew out a green silk purse to pay the postage. I saw through the meshes a heap of gold as big as an egg. There must have been, at least, forty or fifty louis," said Calebasse, whose eyes lighted with covetousness; "and yet he dresses like a beggar. I believe he is one of those old misers, who are fairly stuffed with gold. We know his name, and it will perhaps assist us in gaining an entrance, when Amandine has informed us whether there are any servants in the house."

A loud barking of dogs interrupted Calebasse.

"Ah! the dogs bark," she said; "they must hear the boat; it is either Martial or Nicholas."

At hearing the name of Martial, the features of Amandine were lightened with an expression of restrained joy. After a few moments of expectation, during which the child kept her eyes fixed upon the door, Nicholas, the confederate of Barbillon, to her great disappointment, entered.

The countenance of Nicholas Martial was mean and ferocious It was almost impossible to believe that he had sufficient courage to carry on his criminal and desperate schemes; but an unconquerable energy and determination supplied the place of the physical strength which he needed. Over his blue blouse, Nicholas wore a kind of great coat witnout sleeves, made out of a goat skin, on which the long brown hair was left. On entering the house, he threw upon the ground a pig of copper, which he seemed to have been carrying with great difficulty.

"Good night and good booty, mother," he exclaimed, in a

deep, gruff voice, after relieving himself from his burden; "there are still in my boat three more pigs like this, a bundle of clothes, and a box filled with I do not know what, for I have not amused myself with opening it; perhaps I am robbed myself, but we shall see."

"And what did the man of the quay Billy want?" asked Calebasse, while the widow looked at him in silence. For an answer he placed his hand in the pocket of his pantaloons, and took therefrom several pieces of silver.

"Did you take all that from him?" asked Calebasse.

"No; he forked over this himself, and he will fork over eight hundred more after I have ——. But enough at present; let us first unload my boat, and we can chat afterward. Is Martial here?"

"No," said the sister.

"So much the better; we can dispose of the booty without his assistance. There is no need of his knowing anything about it."

"You are afraid of him, coward!" said Calebasse sharply.

"Afraid of him! I?" and he shrugged his shoulders. "I am afraid he will sell us: as for fear, this knife has too sharp a tongue."

"Oh yes, you crow loud enough when he is not present, but when he is here you shut up your bill."

Nicholas appeared indifferent to the reproach; and said, "Come quick, quick to the boat: where is François, he might aid us?"

"Mother has flogged and shut him up stairs; he will sleep without his supper."

"Good; but let him come for all that and help unload the boat. With Calebasse, and him and myself, we can bring it all in one trip."

The widow raised her finger to the ceiling; Calebasse understood, and went after François. The gloomy face of the mother had lost a few of its wrinkles since the return of Nicholas; she loved him more than she did Calebasse, but less than the son who was imprisoned at Toulon; for the motherly affection of the ferocious creature seemed to increase in proportion to the turpitude of the family. This perverse partiality will explain the indifference of the widow, to her two youngest children, and her hatred of Martial, the eldest son, who, though leading far from an irreproachable life, might pass for an honest man, when compared with Nicholas, Calebasse, or the prisoner at Toulon.

"Where have you been wandering, to-night?" said the widow to Nicholas.

"In coming from the quay Billy, where I had an appointment for this evening, I met with a long boat near the bridge of the Invalides, fastened to the quay. It was quite dark, and as I saw no light in the cabin, I supposed the sailors were on shore. I went a board, with the intention, if I met any person, to ask for a piece of rope to mend my oar. I entered the cabin and found no one; I hooked whatever I could find; a bundle of clothes, a large box, and four pigs of copper, which I took from the deck; for I went twice. The long-boat was loaded with copper and iron. But here comes François and Calebasse: come quick to the boat, come girl, and you, too, Amandine, you can bring the clothes. Before a dog learns how to hunt, he must learn how to carry."

When the widow was left alone, she employed herself with preparing the supper for the family; placed upon the table some glasses, bottles, china plates, silver spoons and forks. Before she had finished these arrangements, the children returned, heavily loaded.

The weight of the two pigs of copper which he carried on his shoulder, seemed to overpower little François, and Amandine was half concealed under a heap of stolen clothes which she carried on her head; while Nicholas, assisted by Calebasse, carried a box of white wood, on which was placed the fourth pig of copper.

"The box! the box! let us tear it open!" exclaimed Calebasse, with savage impatience. The pigs of copper were thrown upon the ground, while Nicholas took the hatchet which he carried in his belt, and forced it under the lid of the box, with the intention of prying it off. The red glare of the fire fell upon this scene of plunder, and the wind whistled without with redoubled violence. Nicholas, dressed in his goat-skin overcoat, was bending over the box, and giving utterance to oaths and blasphemous ejaculations, as the thick cover resisted his efforts. With eyes sparkling with cupidity, and cheeks flushed with the excitement of robbery, Calebasse pressed upon the box with her whole weight, in order to assist Nicholas.

The widow, separated from the group by the table, bent over it her tall form, and fixed upon the stolen box a fiery, feverish and avaricious gaze; and finally, the two children, whose good instincts had so often triumphed over the cursed influence of this frightful domestic corruption, yielded to the attraction of a fatal curiosity.

Side by side, with sparkling eyes and oppressed breathing, François and Amandine were not the least eager to know the contents of the box, not the least disappointed at the delay in the operations of Nicholas; finally, the lid broke into fragments. The family uttered a shout of joyful surprise, and all rushed with savage eagerness, upon the box, which probably had been consigned from Paris to some dealer in dry goods on the river. It contained a large quantity of fabrics, designed for female apparel.

"Nicholas is not robbed," said Calebasse, unrolling a piece of mousseline de laine.

"No, indeed," added the brigand, displaying several yards of silk handkerchiefs. "I have made my expenses."

"Bombazine! that will sell like bread," said the widow, fumbling in the box.

"The receiver of Bras-rouge, who lives in rue du Temple, will buy the cloth, and Father Micon, who lives in the quarter Saint Honoré, will purchase the copper."

"Amandine," said François to his sister, "what a nice cravat one of those handkerchiefs would make which Nicholas holds in his hand."

"'Twould also make a very handsome *marmotte*," responded the little girl with admiration.

"You have made a fine spec in boarding the long-boat, Nicholas," said Calebasse; "look, here are some shawls; three of real raw silk, mother."

"Mother Burette will give at least five hundred francs for the assortment," said the widow, after an attentive examination.

"Then it must be worth, at least fifteen hundred francs," said Nicholas; "it is well said that all receivers are thieves; but never mind, I am not very skillful at bartering; I shall be fool enough to do whatever Mother Burette says and Father Micon also: but I do not care for him, he is a friend."

"After all, that seller of old iron is as thievish as the rest of the gang; but this rabble of receivers always abuse our necessities," said Calebasse, enveloping herself in a shawl.

"It's all told," said Nicholas, reaching the bottom of the box.

"We must now hide everything," said the widow.

"I will keep this shawl," said Calebasse.

"You keep it! You 'll keep it if I give it to you. Madam Free-and-easy."

"You need n't make so much fuss about my taking it."

"Me! I hook at the risk of my skin. You would not have been jugged had I been caught in the long-boat."

"There's your shawl, I don't want it," said Calebasse tartly, throwing it back into the box.

"I am not speaking about the shawl; I am not stingy enough for that; one more or one less, will make no difference with Mother Burette, she buys by the lot," said Nicholas; "but, instead of saying you would keep the shawl, why did n't you ask me to give it to you? Keep it, or I will throw it into the fire to make the kettle boil."

These words seemed to calm the unpleasant feelings of Calebasse. She took the shawl without hesitation.

Nicholas seemed to be in a generous humor, for, tearing apart two handkerchiefs with his teeth, he threw one to both François and Amandine, who had not ceased contemplating the articles with envious eyes.

"Those are for you, urchins; the mouthful will give you a taste; appetite increases with eating. Now go to bed: I have something to say to mother, and your supper shall be sent up stairs."

The two children clapped their hands with joy, and shook in triumph the stolen handkerchiefs which had been given them.

"Now, little fools, will you listen to Martial again? Did he ever give you any handkerchiefs?"

François and Amandine interchanged glances, and cast down their eyes without reply.

"Speak!" said Calebasse, harshly; "did he ever give you any presents?"

"No, indeed; he never gave us any," said François, looking at his red handkerchief with delight.

"No, brother: Martial does not give us presents," added Amandine, in a low voice, "because he can't."

"If he stole he could, could n't he, François?" asked Nicholas, in a harsh voice.

"Yes, brother," said François, and then added: "What a beautiful handkerchief! what a fine cravat for Sundays!"

"What a splendid *marmotte* this will make," said Amandine.

"And the children of the man who keeps the plaster-kilns, will be filled with envy when they see you go by," said Calebasse; and she studied the faces of the children to discern whether they understood the evil purport of these words. The abomina

ble creature summoned vanity to aid in stifling the last virtuous impulse in their tender bosoms. "The beggars! they will die with jealousy! With your red silk handkerchief, you will look like a little princess."

"That is a fact," said François; "and I am much better pleased with my cravat, now that I know that the kiln-boys will be vexed because they hav n't any. Don't you say so, Amandine?"

"I 'm glad that I 've got a fine *marmotte*, that 's all."

"You never will be anything but a fool," said Calebasse, contemptuously; and then taking from the table a piece of bread and some cheese, she gave it to the children, and said to them: "Go to-bed. Here is a lantern; take care you don't set the house on fire, and blow it out before you go to sleep."

"Look here," added Nicholas. "If you dare to speak to Martial about the clothes, or the box, or the copper, I will make you dance in fine style, and take away your handkerchief also."

After the departure of the children, Nicholas and his sister buried the clothes, the box of goods, and the copper, in a small hole a few feet underneath ground, the door to which was in the kitchen, near the fireplace.

"Now, mother, let us have some wine," said the bandit, and let it be of the best quality; some brandy, also. I have earned my food to-day. Bring on the supper, Calebasse; Martial may gnaw the bones: good enough for him. Let us now talk of that fellow of the quay Billy, for there will have to be hot work to-morrow or the day after, if I am to pocket the money which he has promised. But let me have some drink. By thunder! I am able to stand treat to-night."

And Nicholas again shook the five-franc pieces which he had in his pocket—threw one side his goat-skin overcoat and his black woollen cap, and drew up to the table before a dish of stewed mutton, a piece of cold veal, and some salad.

After Calebasse had brought the wine and the brandy, the widow, invariably calm and gloomy, took her seat upon one side of the table; having Nicholas on the right and her daughter on the left, while opposite her were the vacant places of Martial and the two children. The bandit drew from his pocket a large and long Spanish knife, with a horn handle and a sharp blade, and looking at the formidable weapon, with a glance of ferocious satisfaction, said to the widow;

"Cut-throat is always sharp. Hand me the bread, mother?"

"Speaking of a knife, François has found that thing in the wood-pile."

"What thing?" asked Nicholas, not understanding the allusion.

"He saw one of the feet."

"Of the man?" exclaimed Nicholas.

"Yes," said the widow, placing a slice of meat upon her son's plate.

"That 's very singular: the ditch was deep. But I suppose since that time, the earth has caved in."

"To-night we must throw everything into the river," said the widow.

"That will be safer," said Nicholas.

"We will fasten a stone to it, with a piece of the boat-chain," said Calebasse.

"Not such a bad idea," said Nicholas, pouring out a glass of wine; then extending the bottle to the widow, said: "Come, let 's drink to your health, mother, 't will chirk you up."

The widow moved back her glass, shook her head, and said to her son:

"Well; about that man of the quay Billy?"

"Here it is," said Nicholas, without interrupting his mastication for a moment. "After arriving at the landing, I fastened my boat and went on to the quay; seven o'clock was just striking from the military bakery at Chaillot; it was so dark that I could not see my hand before me. I walked along the quay for a quarter of an hour, when I heard some stealthy steps behind me. I walked slow, and a man inclosed in a cloak, approached me, and coughing, halted; I also halted. All that I know about his face is, that his cloak covered up his nose, and his hat concealed his eyes."

We will remind the reader, that this individual was Jacques Ferrand, the notary; who, desirous of removing Fleur de Marie, had this morning sent Madam Seraphin to the Martials, whom he intended to make the agents of his crime.

"'Bradamanti,' said the man," Nicholas continued. "This was the pass-word agreed upon between the old woman and myself. 'Ravageur,' I answered, by way of countersign.

"'Your name is Martial,' said he to me.

"'Yes, sir.'

"'A woman went this morning to your island. What did she say to you?'

"'She said that you wished to speak to me in behalf of Mr. Bradamanti.'

"'Do you wish to earn money?'

"'Yes, sir: very much.'

"'Have you a boat?'

"'We have four, sir; boatmen and ravageurs, from father to son. That 's our trade, at your service.'

"'This is what you must do, if you are not afraid.'

"'Afraid of what?'

"'Of seeing some one drown by accident, just assisting, however, the accident a little. Do you understand?'

"'You wish to have me make some lady take an accidental drink out of the Seine. Very well: as it is a delicate dish, the seasoning will be expensive.'

"'How much for two?'

"'For two? Are there two persons who are desirous of being ducked in the Seine?'

"'Yes.'

"'Five hundred francs a head. That is not dear.'

"'Agreed. A thousand francs.'

"'Paid in advance.'

"'Two hundred francs in advance: the balance afterward.'

"'You suspect me, sir.'

"'No: you may pocket my two hundred francs without fulfilling the agreement.'

"'And you, sir: when the job is completed, and I ask for my eight hundred francs, may say to me, 'Thank you, sir; I 've had enough.'"

"'There is a chance in everything. Does it suit you? Yes or no? Two hundred francs in hand; and day after to-morrow at nine o'clock, in this place, eight hundred more shall be paid.'

"'And how will you know that I have given the drink to the two patients?'

"'I shall know it. That 's my look out. Is it agreed?'

"'It is agreed, sir.'

"'Here; take the two hundred francs. Now hear me.

"'You will recognize the old woman, who called to see you this morning?

"'To-morrow, or at all events, the day after, you will see her arrive at about four o'clock in the afternoon, on the bank of the river opposite your island, with a young girl with light hair. The old woman will make you a signal by shaking her handkerchief.'

"'Yes, sir.'

"'How long a time will it take to row from the bank to your island?'

"'Full twenty minutes.'

"'Have your boats flat bottoms?'

"'Flat as my hand, sir.'

"'You will contrive, ingeniously, a large hole in the bottom of your boat, in such a manner, that by opening the hole, you may sink the boat in the twinkling of an eye. Do you understand?'

"'Perfectly, sir. You are very cunning. I have fortunately an old boat, half rotten, which I wish to tear to pieces. It will answer very well for this last voyage.'

"'You must start from your island with this boat, that is prepared for sinking. A safe boat must follow you, manned by some one of your family. You land, and take aboard the old woman and the young girl with light hair, into the decayed boat; shove off a reasonable distance from the shore, and pretending to stoop down and arrange something, you open the hole and jump hastily into the other boat, while the old woman and the young blonde——'

"'Drink of the same cup. All right, sir.'

"'But are you sure you will not be interfered with, should customers come to your tavern?'

"'There is no danger, sir. At that hour, and particularly in the winter, we have no customers. It is our dead season; and if they should come there, they are all tried friends, and would not trouble me.'

"'Very well. I do not wish that you should expose yourself to any jeopardy. The boat will be presumed to have sunk through rottenness, and the cargo with it. To convince yourself that both are thoroughly ducked, you might, if they should happen to float, or cling to the boat, exert all your ingenuity to save them, and——'

"'Help them dive again?'

"'Will it not be better to have the voyage made after sundown, so that it may be quite dark when the accident happens?'

"'No, sir; for if I cannot see clear, how can I tell whether my two passengers have drank enough, or whether they need more?'

"'That is true. Then the accident must happen before the sun sets.'

"'Yes; but will not the old woman suspect anything?'

"'No. Upon meeting you, she will tell you in your ear, 'that you must drown the little one, but that when you are ready to sink the boat, to give her notice, that she may escape.' You will reply to her in such a manner, as to remove all her suspicions.'

"'So that she will think that the little blonde is the only one that is to take a drink ?'

"'Yes; but she must drink with her.'

"'It is very nicely arranged.'

"'But above all, the old woman must not suspect anything.'

"'Be easy, sir; she will swallow the dose, as if 't were honey.'

"'Good luck to you, my boy. If I am satisfied with your work. I may employ you again.'

"'At your service, sir.'

"Upon this," continued the brigand, completing his narrative, "I left the man with the cloak, and passing by the long-boat, rifled it of the booty which you have seen."

It appears by the narrative of Nicholas, that the notary wished, by a double crime, to put to death at the same time Fleur de Marie and Madam Seraphin, by making the latter the victim of the snare which she supposed was solely intended for Goualeuse. It is necessary to repeat, that the notary, fearful lest at some time Chouette should reveal to Fleur de Marie the fact that she had been abandoned by Madam Seraphin, had determined, by her death, to prevent her from being reclaimed—a blow which would have been fatal to his fortune and reputation. By the sacrifice of Madam Seraphin, the notary relieved himself from one of the two confederates—Bradamanti being the other—who might ruin him, by ruining themselves at the same time: but Jacques Ferrand thought that the grave was a safer guardian of his secret, than even the vital interest which his accomplices had in keeping it. The mother and daughter had listened attentively to the narrative of Nicholas, who only interrupted himself to drink freely, so that his conversation now indicated the strength of his potations.

"But this is not all," continued he. "I am employed in another enterprise, with Chouette and Barbillon, of the rue Fevès. It is a famous job, well got up; and if it don't miss, there will be something to fry, I tell you. The plan is to rob a brokeress in diamonds, who sometimes carries fifty thousand francs' worth of precious stones in her basket."

"Fifty thousand francs!" exclaimed the mother and daughter in chorus, with eyes that sparkled with avaricious greediness.

"Yes. Bras-rouge is to be one of the party: he has decoyed the brokeress by means of a letter, which Barbillon and myself carried to the boulevard Saint Denis. That Bras-rouge is a famous fellow; he is well off, and people don't suspect him. To bait the brokeress, he has already sold her a diamond worth four hundred francs. She will not suspect anything, and will come toward evening to his tavern on the Champs Elysees, and we will lie in wait for her there. Calebasse must come also, to take charge of my boat while it lays in the Seine: if we have to carry away the brokeress, dead or alive, it will be a convenient conveyance, for it leaves no track behind it. Such is Bras-rouge's plan, and there is great depth in it."

"I have always suspected Bras-rouge, after the affair of Montmartre. Your brother Ambrose was sent to Toulon, but Bras-rouge was set at liberty."

"Because there was no proof against him: he is too cunning for that; but he never would betray a confederate."

The widow shook her head, as much as to say that she had but little confidence in the *honor* of Bras-rouge; and after a few moments passed in reflection, she said:

"I like much better the affair of the quay Billy—the plan to drown the two women to-morrow or next day. Martial will be in the way as usual, I suppose."

"The devil's lightning will not rid us of him, then!" said Nicholas, drunk with liquor and rage, and striking his large knife into the table.

"I told mother, that we had had enough of him, and that it could not last," said Calebasse. "As long as he stays here, we are unable to do anything with the children."

"I tell you, that the brigand is capable of denouncing us some day or other," said Nicholas. "Do you hear that, mother! if you had listened to me," he added, casting a significant glance toward his mother, "all would have been over now."

"There are other means."

"That is the best," said the brigand.

"At present, no;" replied the widow, in so absolute a tone, that Nicholas was silent, overawed by the influences of his mother, whom he knew to be as criminal and savage as he was himself, and much more resolute.

The widow added: "To-morrow evening he shall leave the island for ever."

"How?" said in one breath, Calebasse and Nicholas.

"He will soon come in: pick a quarrel with him openly to his face, in a manner that you have yet never dared to do: it will come to blows, and I know that he is strong; but there will be two of you against him, and you will have help, but let no knives be used, let no blood be shed; beat him soundly, but do not wound him."

"And after that, mother?" suggested Nicholas.

"After that, we will explain ourselves; we will tell him to leave the island to-morrow, or that the same scene shall be repeated every day. I know that an incessant fight will disgust him; thus far he has been left too tranquil."

"But he is as obstinate as a mule, and he will be likely to remain, even after that, on account of the children." said Calebasse.

"He is a great rascal, but a fight or two will not frighten him," said Nicholas.

"One or two may not, but one every day will; it will be a perfect hell, and he will give up."

"And what if he does not give up?"

"Then I have another sure way of forcing him to leave; to-night or to-morrow morning, at the latest," said the widow, with peculiar grin.

"Truly, mother."

"Yes; but I had rather frighten him with the fight, and if that does not succeed, the other remains."

"And if the other does not succeed, mother?"

"There is a last one which always succeeds."

Upon a sudden, the door flew open, and Martial entered.

The wind roared so loud without, that the barking of the dogs announcing the return of the eldest son, had not been heard.

CHAPTER III.....THE MOTHER AND SON.

MARTIAL entered slowly into the kitchen, in ignorance of the evil designs which were meditated against him. The few words which Louve let fall in her conversation with Fleur de Marie, has already given the reader an idea of the singular life which this man led. Endowed with excellent natural instincts, he was incapable of any action that was positively mean or debased; but he, nevertheless, was far from leading a regular life. He fished in violation of the laws, and his extraordinary strength and courage so overawed the guardians of the grounds, that they submitted to his trespasses, and closed their eyes to his poaching expeditions. To these illegal enterprises, Martial added another pursuit, which was hardly more commendable. A brave and dauntless man, more through excess of courage or spirit of bravado, than through cupidity; he avenged in pugilistic encounters or in battles with clubs, those who had been the victims of some adversary's superior strength. We must add, that Martial chose the side which he vindicated, with a high regard to justice; usually becoming the champion of the weak against the strong.

The lover of Louve bore a strong resemblance to François and Amandine. He was of medium size, but robust and broad-shouldered; his short red hair cut close, displayed to advantage his open forehead; his beard was short, thick and hard; his cheeks broad, his nose square; and a blue and undaunted eye gave to his manly countenance an expression of great resolution and daring. He had on a tarpaulin hat, and, in spite of the severity of the weather, only wore an old blouse over his jacket, and well worn trowsers of coarse velveteen. He carried in his hand a large knotted stick, which he deposited upon the table near him. A large dog, with spots and crooked legs, entered at the same time with Martial; but he crouched close to the door, not daring to approach the fire or the table; experience having convinced Mirant, an old companion of Martial's poaching expeditions, that neither himself nor his master were very agreeable to the family.

"Where are the children?" Such were Martial's first words as he took his seat by the table.

"They are where they are," replied Calebasse.

"Where are the children, mother?" asked Martial, without noticing the answer of his sister.

"They have gone to bed," replied the widow, coldly

"Did they have their supper, mother?"

"Is it any of your business!" replied Nicholas, in a rough voice, after draining a full tumbler of wine, to fortify his courage, for he was rather daunted by the character and strength of his brother.

Martial appeared as indifferent to the bluster of Nicholas as he had to that of Calebasse; and again addressed his mother, saying, "I am very sorry that the children have already retired.'

"So much the worse," replied the widow.

"Yes, so much the worse, for I like to have them seated by my side while I am taking my supper."

"And as they were troublesome to us, we sent them to bed!" exclaimed Nicholas. "If you don't like it, go after them."

Martial, in surprise, fixed a glance upon his brother; but then, as if he had reflected upon the foolishness of a quarrel, he shrugged his shoulders, cut a piece of bread, and helped himself to a slice of meat. The dog now approached Nicholas, but still kept at a very respectful distance. The bandit, enraged at the contemptuous indifference of his brother, and desirous of provoking him beyond restraint, bestowed a furious kick upon Mirant that drew from him a yelp of pain. Martial turned purple at the outrage upon the inoffensive brute. He clenched with energy the knife he held in his hand, and struck the table with violence; but curbing the excess of his anger, he called his dog gently to him: "Here, Mirant!" The dog crouched at his master's feet.

The moderation of Martial defeated the designs of Nicholas, who wished to force him into a quarrel, and he added, "I do not like dogs myself, and I wish you would take yours somewhere else."

Martial poured for himself a glass of wine, and drank it with great deliberation.

Exchanging a rapid glance with Nicholas, the mother encouraged him by a sign to continue his hostilities against Martial, under the hope that a violent quarrel would lead to a final separation. Nicholas went after the stick with which his mother had flogged François, and advancing toward the setter, said roughly, striking him a blow, "Clear out, Mirant."

Until this evening, Nicholas had always shown himself hostile to Martial, but had never dared provoke him with so much determination and audacity. The lover of Louve was convinced that, for some concealed purpose, they wished to drive him to madness, and therefore he redoubled his coolness and indifference.

When the dog howled, from the blow given him by Nicholas, Martial left his seat, opened the door of the kitchen, and turning his dog out, returned and continued his supper. This incredible patience, so much at variance with the ordinary impetuosity of Martial's disposition, completely confounded those who were desirous of provoking him, and they looked at each other in great surprise.

"Remove the wine, Calebasse," said the widow to her daughter.

She was hastening to obey the command, when Martial said: "Wait! I have not finished my supper."

"So much the worse," said the widow, removing the bottle herself.

"Ah! that's entirely another thing," said the eldest son; and pouring out a full tumbler of water, he drank it with great relish, and, smacking his lips, said: "First-rate water!"

This supreme coolness irritated beyond endurance the already excited temper of Nicholas, stimulated by the copious libations he had imbibed. Nevertheless, he still shrank from a direct attack, convinced of the uncommon strength of his brother: he exclaimed, however, suddenly, as if delighted with the inspiration:

"You have done well to turn out your dog: it is a good habit for you to fall into. You may expect to see us drive out your mistress in the same manner—to kick her into the street with our feet, as we have your dog."

"Yes, yes; for if Louve dares to come to the island after she has left the prison," said Calebasse, who understood the intention of Nicholas; "I will box her ears in a manner that she won't forget. And I will make her dive in the mud at the other end of the island, and if she rose to the top, I would thrust back the jade with my feet."

An insult addressed to the being whom he loved with all the wild violence of his nature, triumphed over the pacific resolution of Martial; his face scowled, the blood rushed to his head, the veins of his forehead became as round and hard as cords; but he had still sufficient control over himself, to say to Nicholas in a voice that trembled with restrained passion.

"Take good care of yourself; you are attempting to excite a quarrel, and you may find something which you do not expect."

"What! something to me?"

"Yes, better than the last gift which I bestowed."

"How, Nicholas!" said Calebasse, satirically; "did Martial whip you! Do you hear it, mother! I am not surprised that Nicholas is so afraid of him."

"He whipped me, because he took me by surprise," said Nicholas, turning pale with rage.

"You lie: you attempted to take me by surprise, but I flogged you, nevertheless, and should have beaten you more, if I had not taken compassion upon you. But I now give you warning, that if you dare to use again insulting language toward my mistress—do you hear? I will show you no mercy, but flog you within an inch of your life."

"And supposing—that I choose to speak of her?"

"I'll make your ears ring by way of warning; and if you repeat the provocation, I will box them again."

"And what will you do to me, if I speak of her," said the widow, slowly.

"You?"

"Yes, I."

"You?" repeated Martial, imposing upon himself a strong restraint; "you!"

"You will beat me also, will you not?"

"No: but if you insult Louve, I will flog Nicholas. Now, proceed, it is your concern and his also."

"You will flog me, will you?" said the bandit, elevating his formidable Spanish knife; "you will flog me?"

"No knives, Nicholas!" exclaimed the mother, rising quickly to seize the arm of her son; but intoxicated with fury and with liquor, he pushed back his mother's arm, and rushed upon his brother.

Martial stepped back suddenly, and seized the large knotted stick which he had left on the table, and put himself in an attitude of defence.

"No knives, Nicholas!" repeated the widow.

"Leave him alone," said Calebasse, arming herself with the hatchet.

Nicholas, with his knife brandished in the air, was watching for a favorable moment to rush upon his brother.

"I tell you, and your jade of a she-wolf, that I will slaughter you both, and I begin. At him, mother! at him, Calebasse! let us cool him, he has been master long enough;" and believing the moment favorable for an attack, the brigand rushed upon his brother, knife in hand.

Martial, expert in the management of a stick, moved back one step, raised his stick with the rapidity of lightning, and whirling it round over his head in such a manner as to describe the figure eight, let it fall with so much force upon the arm of Nicholas, that the arm dropped, and the knife fell from his hand.

"Brigand, you have broken my arm," said he, taking hold of the right arm, which fell helplessly by his side, with his left hand.

"No, I felt the rebound of the stick," replied Martial, kicking the knife under the side-board; then taking advantage of the disabled condition of his antagonist, he seized him by the collar, and pushing him back suddenly, as far as the door of the small cellar to which we have alluded, he opened it with one hand, and with the other threw in his brother and locked him up, before he had recovered his surprise at the suddenness of the attack. Turning then toward the Amazons, he seized Calebasse by the shoulders, and in spite of her resistance and her cries, in spite of a slight wound which she inflicted upon his hand with a blow from the hatcket, he shut her up in a lower room of the tavern, which communicated with the kitchen. Then turning toward the widow, who was stupefied at manœuvres as skillful as they were unexpected, Martial said to her coolly: "Now, mother, it is between you and I."

"Yes, it is between you and I," said the widow, as her callous face became animated, and her eyes sparkled, and her death-like complexion kindled with a flush of anger. Rage, fury, imparted an awful expression to her hideous face. "Yes, it is between you and I," said she, in a menacing voice; "I have a long time waited for this moment, and you shall now learn what has been for a long time smouldering in my heart."

"And I will tell you, also, what I have in my heart."

"If you should live for a hundred years, you will not forget this night."

"I shall remember that, upon it, my brother and sister wished to murder me, and that my mother did nothing to prevent it; but let us hear what you have to say against me."

"Since the death of your father, your life has been a continued display of sneaking baseness!"

"Mine!"

"Yes, coward! instead of assisting us to support the family, you run off to Rambouillet, to poach in the woods with that game peddler whom you knew at Bercy."

"If I had remained at home, I should now have been in the galleys, like Ambrose; or about to be there, like Nicholas; or a thief, like you and Calebasse; and that is the cause of your hatred.

"And pray, what is your trade? You steal game, you steal fish—theft without danger—the theft of a coward!"

"Nobody can claim property in fish or game, which run free. To-day, they belong to one man, the next day to another. It is his property who knows how to catch it. I do not, therefore, steal; as to being a coward—"

"You flog, for money, people who are weaker than yourself."

"Because they have beaten others who were weaker than themselves."

"The trade of a coward! yes, of a coward!"

"There may be more honest trades it is true; but it does not lie in your mouth to speak against anybody's trade."

"Why don't you employ yourself in some honest occupation, instead of coming here to sponge your living out of us?"

"I give you the fish which I take, and the money that I earn; to be sure it is not much, but it is enough to pay for all that I cost you. I attempted to become a locksmith, and earn more; but when one has been a vagabond from childhood, on the river and in the woods, it is not such an easy thing to buckle down to a trade; it is, in fact, all over with one—finished for life," added Martial, with a gloomy tone. "I always preferred to live alone, on the water or in the woods, where nobody can ask me any questions; for if some inquisitive person asks me about my father, what can I answer? Guillotined. Of my brother? In the galleys. Of my sister? A thief."

"And what do you say of your mother?"

"What do I say?"

"Yes; what?"

"I say that she is dead."

'And you do well; it is the same thing, in fact; I am dead to you, craven; I disown you. Your brother is in the galleys; your grandfather and father laid their heads bravely upon the scaffold, laughing in the face of both priest and executioner, and, instead of avenging them, you sneak away like a coward."

"Avenge them!"

"Yes; show yourself to be a true Martial. Spit on the guillotine and the executioner, and die like father, mother, brother, and sister."

However accustomed Martial had been to the ferocious enthusiasm of his mother, he could not resist a shudder at the awful expression of the widow of the executed man, while speaking these words. She continued, with even increasing rage—"Oh! coward, and more of a sneak than a coward, you desire to be honest! If you are honest, will you not be eternally rebuked and despised, as the son of an assassin, the brother of a galley slave? but, instead of firing your heart with vengeance, it curdles it with fear; instead of turning at bay and fighting like a bulldog, when your father was beheaded, you skulked away; when you knew that we could not leave the island and go to town, without being hooted at in the streets, and pelted with stones, like mad dogs. I will pay them for it, do you hear me? I will pay them for it!"

"One man, ten men cannot frighten me; but I cannot stand insults from everybody, as the son and brother of condemned criminals. No, no—I could not remain; I preferred to go in the woods and poach with Peter, the game peddler."

"Why did you not stick to the woods?"

"I came away partly on account of a difficulty with a gamekeeper, but more particularly for the children's sake, who are now of an age to be corrupted by your example."

"What do you care about them?"

"What do I care? I do not wish them to become felons like Nicholas and Calebasse."

"You don't say so!"

"Left alone with you, they could not fail to become as bad as the best of you. I applied myself to a trade, with the hope of being able to earn enough to support the children and take them with me from the island; but in Paris, the disgrace entailed upon me was known by everybody; 't was always 'son of a guillotined man; brother of a galley-slave;' and I had so many fights to wipe off these insults, that I was completely disgusted."

"And if honesty disgusted you, 't was a suitable punishment for not joining us, and becoming what we are, and what the children will be in spite of you; yes, in spite of you; you think to catch them by your preaching, but we are on the look-out. François is already one of us; just give him a chance and he will join the gang."

"I tell you it will not be so."

"I know better; he is vicious by nature; you only stand in his way. As for Amandine, when she reaches the age of fifteen she will be able to go alone. They have hooted us; they have flung stones at us; they will find that there is no cowardice in our family, but what you carry in your heart; you are the only disgrace to to the Martial name."*

"What a shame!"

"And as there is danger of our corrupting you, you must go away to-morrow and never return."

Martial looked upon his mother for a moment in silence, and then said to her:

"You instigated the quarrel with me during supper-time, in order to arrive at this point."

"Yes; to show you what you are to expect, if you remain here against our will. It will be to you a hell! yes, a hell! Every day there will be insults, bloody fights; and we shall not always be alone as we have been to-night; we shall have friends to help us, and you won't be able to stand it over a week."

"You think that you are going to frighten me away, do you?"

"I only tell you what will happen to you."

"I care not, I shall remain."

"You will remain!"

"You will remain, you say?"

"Yes."

"Against our will?"

"In spite of you, Calebasse, Nicholas, or any other scoundrel of your gang."

"You make me laugh!"

The language was dreadful, when contrasted with the fiendish expression of the woman.

"I tell you that I shall remain here until I find the means of earning my living elsewhere, and supporting the children. If I were alone, I should have no trouble: I could return to the woods. But on account of François and Amandine, I shall need more time, to discover what I am now looking for. In the meantime I shall remain here."

"You will remain until you are able to carry away the children?"

"You speak my mind precisely."

"You intend to remove the children, then?"

"When I ask, they will come—yes, come running: I will answer for that."

The widow shrugged her shoulders, and said: "I told you, that if you should live a hundred years, you would remember this night. I will now explain to you the reason: but before I do it, tell me whether you are determined to remain."

"Yes, yes! a thousand times, yes!"

"You will soon say, 'No, no! a thousand times, no!' Just listen to me attentively for a moment. Do you know what trade your brother follows?"

"I can guess at it pretty shrewdly; but I do not know his trade."

"You shall know now; he steals for a living."

"So much the worse for him."

"And for you, also."

"For me?"

"If he breaks open a house in the night time, it will send him to the galleys. We receive the goods which he steals; and if we are discovered, we are sent there with him, and you also, as receivers of stolen goods. The family being all jugged, the children will be turned into the streets, to learn there the trade of their father and grandfather, better than they could learn it at home."

"On what proof should I be arrrested as an accomplice?"

"No one knows how you live: you wander about the river; you have the reputation of being a vagrant; you live with us, and every one will believe that you are privy to our thefts."

"I will prove the contrary."

"We will accuse you of being our accomplice."

"Accuse me! Why will you do that?"

"As a reward for remaining here against our will."

"A moment ago you wished to frighten me one way, now you are trying another tack. But it won't do. I can prove that I have never stolen. I shall remain."

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* These frightful lessons are, unhappily, not exaggerated. We read the following in the excellent report of Mr. de Brèglaiores on the penitentiary, in the colony of Mettray, (version of March 13th, 1843.)

"The civil state of our Colonists is important to relate: among them we count thirty-two natural children, thirty-four whose parents are married again, fifty-one *whose parents are in prison*; one hundred and twenty-four whose parents have not been pursued by justice, but who are plunged in the greatest poverty.

"These figures are eloquent and replete with information, they permit us to go from effects to causes, and afford a hope of stopping the progress of an evil, the origin of which is thus demonstrated.

"The number of *criminal parents gives an idea of the education which those children must have received under the tuition of such guides. Taught to rob by their fathers, the sons have fallen under their orders, and believed themselves doing well in following their fathers' example.* Punished by justice, they resign themselves to prison to share the fate of their family, they bring there only the emulation of vice, and we must admit that the light of divine grace still shines in the more rough and coarse natures, so that all honest impulse is not altogether extinguished."

"You will remain, will you? Listen to me further. Do you remember what took place Christmas night of last year?"

"Christmas night?" said Martial, attempting to recall it to his memory.

"Think, recollect."

"I cannot."

"Do you not remember that Bras-rouge brought here a well-dressed man, who wished to conceal himself?"

"Yes: I now remember it. But I went up to bed, and left him at supper with you. He passed the night here, and in the morning, Nicholas went with him to Saint Ouen."

"Are you sure that Nicholas took him to Saint Ouen?"

"You told me so in the morning."

"You were here then, on Christmas?"

"Yes: what of it?"

"That very night the man, who carried a vast sum of money with him, was murdered in this house."

"Murdered here!"

"Murdered, robbed, and buried in the small wood-pile."

"I do not believe it!" exclaimed Martial, turning pale with terror, and discrediting the horrible guilt of this new crime. "I do not believe it; you are attempting to frighten me again."

"Ask your protegé, François, what he saw in the wood-pile this morning?"

"François: and what did he see?"

"One of the feet of the man sticking out of the ground. Take the lantern and see it for yourself."

"No, no;" said Martial, wiping the perspiration from his brow. "I cannot believe you; you say this to——"

"To prove to you that if you remain here against our will, you run the risk every moment of being arrested as an accomplice of both theft and murder. You were here on Christmas night. We will allege that you assisted us in the deed; and how can you prove the contrary?"

"Great God!" exclaimed Martial, hiding his face with his hands."

"Will you remain now?" said the widow, with sardonic laughter.

Martial was completely overpowered by what his mother had just disclosed. He could not doubt the correctness of her statements, nor the plausibility of her inference. His vagrant life, his sojourn with the guilty family, would be strong evidence against him, and the suspicion would become demonstration in the eyes of justice, if his mother, brother, and sister, swore that he was their accomplice."

The widow enjoyed the horror of her son.

"There is one way of escaping from your tribulation: denounce us."

"I ought to do it; but you know very well that I will not."

"That is the reason why I made a full disclosure to you. Will you go now?"

Martial now attempted to move the Megaera, by a kind appeal, and said to her, in a softened tone:

"My mother, I cannot believe you capable of that murder!"

"Just as you please; but leave this place."

"I will go, on one condition."

"I will not listen to it."

"Send the children to learn some trade far distant from this place, in the provinces."

"They shall remain here."

"When you have made them, mother, like Nicholas, Calebasse, Ambrose, and my father, what good will it do you?"

"To help us in some good jobs we have on hand. There are not enough of us yet. Calebasse must remain with me, to take care of the tavern. Nicholas has therefore to go alone. When François and Amandine become well trained, they will be of great service to him, for stones have been flung at them also; and although they were quite small, they deserve to have some revenge."

"Mother, you love Calebasse and Nicholas, do you not?"

"Proceed."

"Let the children imitate them. Let your crimes and theirs be discovered."

"Proceed."

"They will be sent to the scaffold like my father."

"Go on; go on."

"And are you not terrified at the anticipation of such a fate?"

"Their fate and mine will be the same; neither better nor worse. I steal, they steal; I murder, they murder; he who catches the mother, will catch all the brood. If our heads fall, they will all fall in the same basket, where they can bid each other farewell. There is no back out here. You are the only coward in the family, and you are disowned by us. Go away."

"But the children—the children!"

"The children will grow up in the way in which they have started. François is already ripe, and when you are once away, Amandine will rapidly make up for what she has lost."

"I entreat you, mother, to consent to send away the children, that they may learn a trade."

"How many times must I repeat that they are *learning a trade here?*"

The widow articulated these final words, in a manner so determined and resolute, that Martial lost all hope of softening the soul of his mother.

"Since you have made up your mind, listen to me, mother, attentively, in your turn. I will remain."

"Indeed!"

"Not in this house, for I should be assassinated by Nicholas, or poisoned by Calebasse; but as I have no means at present of providing a lodging elsewhere for myself and the children, we will live in the hut at the end of the island; the door is already strong, and I can make it still stronger. Once inside, with my dog, my gun, and my stick, and I shall be in no fear of a mortal living. They will be constantly with me, whether I am in my boat or out of it. At night they will sleep in the hut, and we can live on the fish which I take, until I can provide for them a place elsewhere."

"Do you say so?"

"Neither you, nor my brother, nor Calebasse, can prevent it, if your crimes are discovered. I can say that I only sojourned upon the island to prevent the children from being trained up for the galleys or the guillotine, like the rest of the family. But, may the lightnings strike me, if I leave the island, and the children remain a day longer in this house! Yes! and I defy you and all your friends to force me from this place!"

The widow was well acquainted with the resolute character of Martial. The children were affectionately attached to their eldest brother, and would follow him, in spite of her, wherever he invited them. As for him, always well armed, intrepid, on his guard, in his boat during the day, or barricaded in the hut at night, he could not fear any harm from the enmity of the family. The project of Martial would very probably be carried into execution; but the widow had many reasons for preventing it. As honest artisans consider their children as an element of their wealth, on account of the service which they expect from them, in the same manner the widow regarded Amandine and François, as producing auxiliaries, by means of their crimes. In the next place, her thirst for vengeance on account of the execution of her husband, was as strong as she had represented it. Certain beings, educated in crime and hardened in iniquity, are always in revolt, or in desperate war against society; and they think that new crimes will avenge the just punishment which has been inflicted upon the past enormities of their friends. Finally, the criminal designs of Nicholas against Fleur de Marie and the brokeress, might be interrupted by the presence of his brother. The widow had expected that either the threat of an incessant domestic broil, or the disclosure to Martial of the danger he ran of being regarded as an accomplice of their crimes, would certainly drive him from the island. As cunning as she was penetrating, the widow now found that she must resort to treachery, in order that her son might become the victim of a bloody stratagem, and after a long silence, she said to him, with affected bitterness:

"I understand your project: you do not wish to denounce us yourself, you wish to have us denounced by the children."

"I!"

"They know now there is a man buried here: they know that Nicholas has stolen. Once apprenticed, they will speak out, and we shall be seized and hung, every one of us—you, as well as we. See what would happen, if I should listen to you; and if I were to allow you to place the children elsewhere. And yet, you say, that you do not wish me any harm. I do not ask you to love me; but do not hasten the moment when we shall be taken."

The subdued tone of the widow, induced Martial to believe that his threats had produced a salutary effect upon her. What a snare he fell into!

"I know the children," he replied. "I am sure that my telling them to say nothing, they will say nothing. At any rate, one way or the other, we shall always be with them; and I can always answer for their silence."

"Who can answer for the words of a child? especially in Paris, where the people are so curious and so babbling. It is as much that they may aid us in our designs, as that they may be unable to betray us, that I wish to keep them here."

"May they not go sometimes from the village to Paris? Who is to prevent them from speaking, if they are required to do

so? If they were far from here—and would to Heaven they were!—whatever they might say, could do no harm."

"Far, far from here! and where!" said the widow, looking fixedly at her son.

"Leave me to take care of them. It matters little to you."

"How will you live; and with them too?"

"My old locksmith is a brave man! I will tell him what he must say; and perhaps he may take an interest in the children. I will put them out as apprentices far from here. We shall part in two days, and you shall no longer speak of them."

"Indeed! I wish them to stay with me; I shall be more sure of them."

"Then I shall establish myself to-morrow, in the barracks upon the island. I also have a head, you know."

"Yes: I know it. Oh! how I wish to see you far from here. Why do you not live in the woods!"

"I offer to relieve you of myself and the children."

"Will you then desert Louve, whom you love so much?" said the widow, suddenly.

"That is my business. I know what I have to do: I have my own private plans."

"If I were to let you carry away Amandine and François, would you never allow them to set foot in Paris again?"

"Before three days we shall be gone, and as it were, *dead* to you."

"I would prefer that, to having you here, and living in perpetual distrust of them. Come; since they must be given up, take them away, and be off, all of you, as quickly as possible. May I never see you again!"

"Do you say so?"

"I do. Give me the key of the cavern, that I may open it for Nicholas."

"No; he will sleep himself sober. I will give you the key to-morrow morning."

"And Calebasse?"

"That is a different case. Open it for her when I am gone. She abhors the sight of me."

"Begone! my curses on you!"

"Good evening, mother."

"Good evening."

"This will be the last, fortunately," said Martial.

"The last," replied the widow.

Her son lighted a candle, then opening the kitchen door, called his dog, which ran to him, fawningly, from without, and followed its master to the upper part of the house.

"Begone! Your business is settled," murmured the mother, showing her son her fist, as he went up stairs. "This is for you, when you want it." Then, aided by Calebasse, who went to seek a bunch of false keys, the widow opened the cavern where Nicholas was, and immediately set him at liberty.

CHAPTER IV..... FRANCOIS AND AMANDINE.

FRANCOIS and Amandine slept in a room directly over the kitchen, at the extremity of a corridor, into which several other chambers opened, serving as private rooms for the loafers of the tavern.

After having eaten their frugal supper, instead of extinguishing their lamp according to the widow's orders, the two children had watched, leaving their door half open to light their brother Martial in the passage, when he should come back into the room.

Placed upon a broken stool, the lantern cast its pale rays through its transparent sides. The walls of plaster were lighted up by a few straggling rays; there was a truckle-bed for François, and an old bed for Amandine, which was too short for her; there were broken chairs, and broken benches, which had suffered violence from the turbulent guests of the tavern of the ravageur's Island; such was the interior of the place. Amandine, seated upon the side of the truckle-bed, tried to dress her hair in *marmotte* style with a stolen handkerchief, the gift of Nicholas. François held a piece of a broken mirror before his sister, who, with her head turned half round, was engaged in arranging the large rosette which she had made in knotting the two corners of her handkerchief.

Very much astonished at this head-dress, François neglected for an instant to hold the glass before his sister.

"Raise the mirror a little higher," said Amandine. "Now, I don't see myself any better. There—good! Wait a little—wait till I have finished. Ah! look! how do you think I am dressed?"

"Oh! very well, very well! La! what a beautiful rosette! You will make me one like that in my neckcloth, won't you!"

"Yes, directly; but just let me walk about a bit. You go before me—backward, keeping the mirror as high as possible, so that I may be able to see myself marching."

François executed as well as he could this difficult manœuvre, to the great satisfaction of Amandine, who strutted about, triumphant and glorious, under the bows and enormous ear-knot of her cap. Innocent and simple as this conduct would have been under other circumstances, it was sinful now, because François and Amandine knew very well that the object of their vanity had been stolen: another proof of the fearful facility with which even children who are well educated, are almost unconsciously corrupted, when they are continually stifled by an atmosphere of crime.

We have said, moreover, that their brother Martial, the only Mentor of these unhappy children, was himself not free from reproach: though incapable of committing a theft or a murder, he led an irregular and vagabond life. Doubtless, he revolted at the crimes of his family; he tenderly loved the two children; he still defended them from bad treatment; he endeavored to shelter them from his family's pernicious influence: but, not being sustained by the precepts of a rigorous and strict morality, his advice was but a frail safeguard to the objects of his care. They refused to commit certain bad actions, not from any honest conviction, but to obey Martial, whom they loved, and disobey their mother, whom they shunned and detested. As to notions of justice and injustice, they had none whatever, familiarized as they were with the detestable examples which were constantly before their eyes: for, as we have said, this rural tavern, the resort of the very refuse of the population, was a theatre of low orgies, of foul debauchery; and Martial, hostile as he was to theft and murder, did not hesitate to exhibit himself at these demoniac revels. The moral instincts of the children, especially those of François, were most doubtful, vacillating, and unstable. They had reached that dangerous period when the soul, suspended between good and evil, may in one moment be for ever ruined or for ever saved.

"How well this red handkerchief becomes you, sister!" said François; "how very pretty it is! When we go and play in the sand before the plaster-kiln, you must rig yourself up in this fashion, so as to plague the children who are always throwing stones at us, and calling us little scape-gallowses. And then I will put on my beautiful red cravat, and we'll tell them that it is not any matter, for they haven't got such elegant silk handkerchiefs as we have."

"But, say, François," said Amandine, after a moment's reflection; "suppose they find out that the handkerchiefs we have on are stolen, they will call us little thieves."

"Why should it trouble us, if they do call us thieves?"

"Because, it is true; it is all the same."

"Nicholas gave us these handkerchiefs, and we did not steal them."

"But Nicholas stole them from a boat, and our brother Martial says it is wicked to steal."

"But if Nicholas stole them, that is not our fault."

"Do you think so, François?"

"Certainly, I do."

"I would much rather that they had been given to me by the person to whom they belonged, and would n't you, François?"

"It is all the same thing to me; they are gifts, and they are ours."

"You are very sure of that?"

"Yes, yes: be quiet then."

"It is very well, if we have done nothing which brother Martial has forbidden; and we have such elegant handkerchiefs."

"Say, Amandine; suppose Martial had known that Calebasse made you take a four-cornered neck-kerchief from the peddler's pack, the other day, when he was looking another way."

"Ah! François, don't tell him that!" said the poor child, with her eyes full of tears; "brother Martial won't love us any longer, you know, and he will leave us here all alone."

"Never do you fear. Do you think I am going to tell him? You make me laugh."

"Don't laugh at that, François; I have been so sorry about it. But I was obliged to do it; sister pinched me till the blood came, and she made such dreadful eyes at me! My heart failed me twice, and I thought I could never do it. After all, the peddler did not discover it, and sister kept the neck-kerchief. But if they had found me out, François, they would have put me in prison."

"But they did not find you out: it is all the same as if you had not stolen it."

"Do you think so?"

"To be sure."

"How wretched they must be in prison!"

"No such thing."

"How is that, François! is n't it so?"

"Just hear this! You know that big cripple who lives at Paris, at father Micon's house, Nicholas's agent, who keeps a boarding-house in Paris, in the passage Brasserie?"

"A big cripple!"

"Yes; who came here late in the autumn, on business for father Micon, with a monkey showman, and two women."

"Oh, yes! the big cripple, who spent such heaps and heaps of money!"

"I really believe he paid for everybody! You recollect the water-parties; and how I managed so as to have the monkey showman in the boat, to play music on his organ?"

"And then, François, what splendid fireworks they sent up in the evening!"

"And the big cripple was not mean; he gave me ten sous for myself! he never drank any but sealed wine; they had chickens at every meal; he had not less than eighty francs."

"What! so much! François?"

"Oh! yes."

"He was very rich then?"

"Not at all: what he had, was money which he had gained in prison, from which he had just came out."

"And he gained all that money in prison?"

"Yes: he said that he still had seven hundred francs; that when it was all done, he would do some good job, and that if he did not succeed, it was quite the same to him, as he would return to his jolly old jail companions."

"He was not afraid of the prison, then, François?"

"On the contrary, he said to Calebasse that they are there a party of friends and revellers; that he had never enjoyed a more comfortable bed or better nourishment, than in prison; good meat four times a week, fire all winter, and a fair sum of money when they leave; but that there are some honest working-people who live on hunger and cold when they can get no work."

"Oh! François, did the cripple man say so?"

"I heard him distinctly: I was rowing in the boat when he related his history to Calebasse and the two women, who said that women also, received equally good treatment in prison. They had just came out and they ought to know."

"But then, François, can it be that there is any harm in stealing, since the prison is such an excellent place?"

"Mercy! I don't know, for my part. Here there is no one who says it is wicked to steal, but our brother Martial; perhaps he may be wrong."

"It is quite the same; we must believe him, François; he loves us so much."

"He loves us, it is true; when he is here, no one beats us. If he had been here this evening, mother would not have whipped me so much. The old beast! how wicked she is. Oh! how I hate her—how I hate her! How I wish I were grown up, that I might pay her back for all the blows she has given me; for all that she has given you too, who are weaker than myself."

"Oh! François, be quiet; it makes me afraid to hear you speak so of our mother; so—to say you would beat her," cried the poor little creature, weeping and throwing her arms round her brother's neck, and embracing him tenderly.

"No; it is true, very true," replied François, gently putting Amandine away. "Why do mother and Calebasse, treat us so tyrannically!"

"I don't know," replied Amandine, drawing her hand across her eyes; "it is perhaps, because they have taken our brother Ambrose to the galleys, and guillotined our father, that they are so unjust to us."

"Is that our fault?"

"My God! no: but what would you have?"

"Why, if I were to be always treated in this way, always with blows, at last I would prefer to steal, as they wish us to do. What good does it do me to abstain from stealing?"

"And what will Martial say?

"Oh! I shall do it, without his permission. I have taken his advice too long, if I am only to be whipped in this style, every day. Think of this evening; never was mother so wicked; she was like a fury; it was as dark as pitch, and she did not speak a word; I only felt her cold hand grasping me by the neck, while she flogged me with the other; and then it seemed to me that her eyes flashed."

"Poor François! for having said that you had seen a bone of a dead man in the cellar!"

"Yes: a foot which stuck out of the earth," said François, trembling with affright: "I am very certain."

"Perhaps there may once have been a cemetery here: don't you think so?"

"Possibly; but then, why did our mother say that she would whip me again, if I should speak of the dead man's bone to my brother Martial? You see the truth is, somebody has been killed in a dispute, and they have buried him here to prevent the death from being known."

"You are right; for do you remember a terrible calamity that happened here?"

"When?"

"You know the time when Mr. Barbillon struck the great lean man with his knife? How lean he was! he exhibited himself for money."

"Ah! yes; the walking skeleton, as they called him. My mother came to separate them: but for her, perhaps Mr. Barbillon would have killed the lean man. Did you see how he foamed, and how his eyes seemed to start from his head at Barbillon?"

"Oh, he would not be afraid to strike you with his knife for nothing; he is such a wild fellow."

"So young and so wicked, François?"

"Tortillard is younger, but he would be quite as wicked if he were as big."

"Oh yes, he is very wicked. The other day he whipped me because I would not play with him."

"Did he indeed beat you? Well, the first time he comes—"

"No, no; you see, Francois, it was in fun."

"Indeed!"

"Yes, indeed."

"Well, but I do not know how he manages his game, and how he has so much money. Is he lucky? The time when he came home with Chouette, he showed us some pieces of gold and twenty francs. He had a contemptuous air when he said to us—you would be equally well off if you were not little saints."

"Yes, in slang, that means beasts or idiots."

"Oh yes, it is true."

"Forty francs in gold! how many fine things I shall be able to buy with that—and you, Amandine?"

"Oh, yes; me also!

"What will you buy?"

"Let me see," said the child, looking down with a meditating air; "I will first buy a good overcoat for my brother Martial, nice and warm, that he shall never be cold in his boat."

"But for yourself—for yourself?"

"I should like very much to have that little Jesus in wax, with his lamb and his cross, which the plaster merchant had last Sunday—you know—under the porch of the church of Asnières."

"By the way, you must n't tell mother or Calebasse that we were ever in a church."

"True enough; she has always forbidden us to go inside of one. What a pity! for a church is so very beautiful inside; is n't it, François?"

"Yes! what elegant silver chandeliers!"

"And the portrait of the Holy Virgin; how kindly it looks!"

"And the fine lamps—did you see them? and the fine cloth on the table at the farther end, where the priest said mass with his two friends, dressed just like himself, who gave him bread and wine?"

"Say, François, don't you remember, last year, when we saw from here all the little communicants, in their white veils, pass over the bridge? What sweet bouquets they had!"

"And how sweetly they sang as they marched on, holding the ribbons of the banner!"

"And how the silver embroidery of their banner glistened in the sun! How much it must have cost!"

"Dear me! wasn't it lovely, eh, François?"

"Indeed it was; and the communicants with their bows of white satin, and their wax tapers with handles of gold and crimson velvet."

"And the little boys, they had a banner also, had they not, François? Oh! dear, how I was whipped that day for asking mother why we did not walk in the procession with the other children."

"It was then that they forbade us ever to go into a church when we went to the market-place or to Paris, unless it was to steal from the poor-box, or the pockets of the parishoners, while they were listening to mass, said Calebasse, grinning, and showing her yellow teeth."

"Poh! what a wicked beast!"

"Oh! steal in a church; they shall kill me first; don't you say so, François?"

"There or elsewhere; what difference does it make when you are once decided?"

"I cannot tell the reason why, but I should be much more afraid."

"On account of the priests, I suppose."

"No: on account, perhaps, of the picture of the Holy Virgin, which looks so mild and so good."

"What do you care for the picture? it will not eat you up."

"But I cannot help it; it is not my fault."

"Speaking of priests," said Amandine, "do you remember the time when Nicholas boxed me upon the ears because he saw me bow to the curate? I did not know that it was wrong."

"Yes: but brother Martial agreed with Nicholas, that it was not necessary to bow to priests."

At this moment steps were heard in the passage.

Martial was returning to his room without suspicion, after his conversation with his mother, under the impression that Nicholas would remain imprisoned until morning. Perceiving a ray of light through the door of the children's room, which was partially open, he entered there. They both hastened to meet him, and he kissed them affectionately.

"Why have you not gone to bed, you young chatterers!"

"We were waiting to see you go to your room, and bid you good night," said Amandine.

"Besides, we heard loud voices down stairs, as if people were disputing," added François.

"Yes," said Martial; "I had some words with Nicholas; but I am glad to find you up, as I have some news for you."

"For us, brother?"

"Would you like to leave this place with me, and go very far away?"

"Oh, yes, brother!"

"Yes, brother!"

"Well; within a few days we three shall leave the island."

"What happiness!" exclaimed Amandine, striking her hands together in ecstacy.

"And where shall we go!" asked François.

"You will see, inquisitive one. But never mind where we go. You shall learn a good trade, which will enable you to earn a living, that is certain."

"Shall I no longer fish with you, brother?"

"No; you will become an apprentice to some cabinet-maker or locksmith. You are skilful and strong, and after a year you will earn something. But what is the matter with you? you do not seem pleased!"

"It is because——"

"Well; speak out."

"I should rather fish with you, and mend your nets, than learn a trade."

"Indeed!"

"To be shut up all day in a work-shop is gloomy, and to become an apprentice is tiresome."

Martial shrugged his shoulders.

"Is it better to be idle, to be a vagabond and a loafer, until you are old enough to become a thief?" said Martial, severely.

"No, brother; but I should like to live with you elsewhere, in the same manner that we live here; that's all."

"Yes, that's it; to drink, eat, sleep and fish, like a gentleman."

"I should like that better."

"That's very possible; but would you not like something else! I see that it is high time, my poor François, that I should take you from this place, for, without being yourself aware of it, you will soon be as bad as the rest. My mother was right; you are vicious, I fear: and you, Amandine, would you not like to learn a trade?"

"Oh yes, my brother! I should like much to learn a trade; I should prefer anything to living here. I shall be rejoiced to go away with you and François."

"But what have you got on your head, my girl?" said Martial, observing the gaudy head-gear of his sister.

"A silk handkerchief which Nicholas gave me."

"He gave me one also," said François, proudly.

"And where did the handkerchief come from? 'T would surprise me, if Nicholas had expended any money to make a present to you."

The two children hung down their heads without replying.

In a moment François replied resolutely, "Nicholas gave them to us: we do not know where they came from; do we, Amandine?"

"No, brother," said the girl, hesitating and blushing, and not venturing to raise her eyes to Martial.

"Do not lie," said Martial, severely.

"We do not lie!" exclaimed François, boldly.

"Amandine, my child, tell the truth," said Martial, with an affectionate tone.

"Well, to tell the whole truth," said the girl, timidly, "these beautiful handkerchiefs came from a box of articles which Nicholas brought this evening in his boat."

"And which he stole?"

"I believe he did, brother, from a long-boat."

"You see, François, that you were lying." The child cast down his eyes without uttering a word."

"Give me your handkerchief, Amandine, and yours, Nicholas."

The young girl took off her head-gear, cast a last glance at the large knot which was still untied, and surrendered her handkerchief to Martial, smothering a sigh of regret. François also drew his handkerchief from his pocket, and like his sister, surrendered it to Martial.

"To-morrow morning," said the brother. "I will return the handkerchiefs to Nicholas. You never should have accepted of them: to take a thing that is stolen is as bad as stealing."

"It's a great pity; the handkerchiefs are very pretty."

"When you have a trade, and earn money by your work, you can buy handkerchiefs as handsome as these. Come, go to bed; it is late, my children."

"You are not angry, are you, my brother?" asked Amandine, timidly.

"No, no, my child; it is not your fault. You are living with wicked people, and you are very apt to act like them, without knowing that it is wrong. When you are with honest people, you will behave like them: and you shall soon be with honest people, or may the devil catch me! Good night, my children."

"Good night, brother."

Martial kissed the children, and they were left alone.

"What is the matter with you, François? You look quite sad."

"Brother took away my handsome handkerchief, and besides, did you not hear? He wishes to take us away, and make us learn a trade."

"Don't you like it?"

"No, indeed."

"Do you like better to stay here, and be flogged every day?"

"I am flogged, but at any rate I do not work. I spend the whole day in the boat, or fishing, or playing, or waiting on the customers, who sometimes give me something, as the big cripple did. It is much more amusing than to be shut up, from morning to evening, in a work-shop, toiling away like a dog."

"But did you not hear brother say, that if we remained here any longer, we should become very wicked?"

"Well, what do I care? since other children already call us little thieves, little guillotines. Besides, it is tedious to work."

"But here we are flogged all the time, brother!"

"We are flogged because we pay more attention to what Martial says, than to what the others say."

"He is so kind to us."

"He is very kind; I do not deny that. I love him very much. He takes us to walk, and they dare not harm us in his presence But then he never gives us anything."

"It is because he has got nothing. What he earns he gives to our mother for his board."

"Nicholas has got something, and I am sure if we obeyed him and our mother, they would not treat us so harshly. They would give us fine clothes, as they did to-night. They would not suspect us in the manner that they do now; and we should have money like little Tortillard."

"Yes, but we should have to steal, and that would displease our brother Martial."

"Well, what of that!"

"Oh, François! If we were caught, we should be put in prison."

"To be in prison is no worse than to be shut up all day in a work-shop. It is the same thing. Besides, the big cripple says, there is a great deal of fun in a prison."

"But you do not think of the sorrow we should cause Martial, for it is for our sake that he came back here, and remains here. If it were not for us, he would be in no trouble; he would go back to the woods and poach, which he likes so much."

"Well; let him take us with him in the woods; that would be the best thing. I should be with him whom I love so much, and I should not be at work, nor bound to a trade, which is a bore."

The conversation of Amandine and François was now interrupted. The door was locked upon the outside by some one.

"They have locked us in!" exclaimed François.

"Good Heaven! Why have they done it, brother? What do they intend to do to us?"

"Perhaps 't is Martial."

"Hark! hark! his dog is barking," said Amandine, listening attentively.

In a few moments François added: "One would say, that they are striking against his door with a hammer. Perhaps they wish to break it open."

"Yes, yes; and the dog continues barking."

"Hark, François! It now seems as if they were nailing up something. How scared I am! What can they be doing to our brother? Hear how the dog howls now!"

"All is quiet, now, Amandine," said Francois, keeping close to the door.

The two children held their breath in great anxiety.

"Now they are coming out of my brother's room. "I hear their footsteps in the passage."

"Let us throw ourselves into our bed; our mother will kill us if she finds that we are still up," said Amandine, in terror.

"No," said François, listening all the time; "they have just passed before our door, and are now running down stairs."

"Oh dear! oh dear! what can have happened?"

"They have now opened the kitchen door."

"Do you think so?"

"Oh! yes. I know the noise which it makes."

"Martial's dog is still howling," said Amandine, listening. Suddenly she exclaimed: "François, our brother is calling us."

"Martial?"

"Yes: don't you hear him?"

And so it was. In spite of the thickness of the door, the powerful voice of Martial reached the ears of the children.

"Good Heaven! we cannot go to him; we are locked in; they must wish to hurt him, since he calls to us."

"If I could prevent them, I would do it, if they should cut me in pieces for it."

"But our brother does not know that they have locked our door. He will think we are not willing to go to his aid. Sing out to him, François, that we are locked in." He was about to follow his sister's advice, when a violent blow from without, shook the blinds of the room in which the children were confined.

"They are coming through the window to kill us," exclaimed Amandine; and in her fright, she rushed upon the bed, and hid her face in her hands. François remained motionless, although he shared the terror of his sister.

After the blow against the window, the blind was not opened, and everything around the house was as silent as the grave. Martial had ceased calling to the children, who were somewhat comforted, but still excited by strong anxiety. François ventured to raise the window slightly, and peep out of doors.

"Take care, my brother," said Amandine, in a low tone. Hearing François open the window, "Can you see anything?" said she, seated upon her bed.

"No: the night is too dark."

"Don't you hear anything?"

"No: the wind blows too hard."

"Come away, come away then."

"I see something now."

"What is it?"

"The light of a lantern, which moves to and fro."

"Who carries it?"

"I see nothing but the light; it is coming this way; I hear voices."

"Who speaks?"

"Hark! hark! 'tis Calebasse."

"What does she say?"

"She says: 'Hold on tight to the ladder.'"

"There: you see, that in taking down the long ladder which was against our window, they made that noise."

"I hear nothing more."

"And what are they doing with the ladder."

"I cannot see."

"Don't you hear anything more?"

"No."

"Oh! dear brother: I fear they have taken the ladder to climb into brother Martial's room."

"It may be."

"If you would only open the blind a little, and see."

"I dare not."

"Only a very little."

"Oh! no, no! What if my mother should perceive it?"

"It is so dark, that there can be no danger."

François, with great reluctance, followed the advice of his sister, and opened the blind slightly and looked through.

"Well, what do you see, brother?" said Amandine, overcoming her timidity, and approaching her brother on tip-toe.

"By the light of the lantern, I can see Calebasse, who holds on to the ladder: they have placed it against Martial's window."

"What else?"

"Nicholas is climbing the ladder, with a hatchet in his hand: I see it shine."

"Ah! you are not in bed, and you are watching us," exclaimed suddenly the widow from below, to François and his sister. At the time she went into the kitchen, she had perceived the light, which the children had not taken the precaution to extinguish. "I am up—I am up! and I have caught you, little spies!" said the widow, in an enraged voice.

Such were the events which took place on the Island of the Ravageur, on the night preceding the day when Madam Seraphin was to bring to it Fleur de Marie.

CHAPTER V. ..... FURNISHED ROOMS TO LET.

The passage of the Brasserie, a dark and obscure street situated in the centre of Paris, but very little known, leads from the rue Traversiere Saint Honoré to the cour Saint Guillaume. About the middle of this damp and gloomy passage, into which the sun seldom penetrates, arose a house with furnished rooms to let, vulgarly called *garni*, on account of the low price at which they were rented. Upon an old sign could be read, "Furnished apartments and sleeping-rooms." On the right of the dark alley was the door of a store no less obscure, which was kept by the principal tenant of the *garni*. The name of this man was Micou, a name frequently mentioned in the conversation between Nicholas and his mother. He was ostensibly a dealer in old iron, but covertly a purchaser of stolen lead, copper, pewter, or iron. To say that he was on terms of business and friendly intercourse with the Martials, is to give a sufficiently definite idea of his moral character.

There is one fact, which is as startling as it is curious: we allude to a sort of affiliation and mysterious fellowship between all the Parisian malefactors. Those prisons where all the convicts associate together, are the great centres from which those waves of corruption flow, that deluge the capital with blood.

Father Micou was a corpulent man of fifty, with a countenance marked by low cunning, a red nose and rubicund cheeks. He wore upon his head a fur cap, and was wrapped up in a green overcoat. Over the small cast-iron stove, at which he warmed himself, could be seen a board with numbers upon it, under which hung the keys of the absent lodgers who had rooms in the tenement. The panes of the front windows, looking into the street, were protected by iron bars, and painted in such a manner, that people from without could not observe what was going on in the shop—a precaution by no means superfluous. Darkness and obscurity seemed to hold dominion throughout the large and capacious store-room. From the damp walls hung rusty chains of all sizes and descriptions, and the floor was almost hidden by heaps of refuse iron.

Three peculiar raps upon the door now attracted the attention of the landlord of the premises—the receiver and vender of stolen goods.

"Come in!" he exclaimed.

Nicholas, the son of the Ravageur, entered. He was very pale; his face was even more sinister and repulsive than it was the day before; and it will be seen, that during the following conversation he affected a noisy gayety. It was the next day to that on which he had had the conflict with his brother, that the following conversation took place.

"Ah! it is you, good subject," said the landlord, cordially.

"Yes, father Micou, I have come to transact some business with you."

"Shut the door then—shut the door."

"My dog and my cart are outside with the articles."

"What have you brought me? lead?"

"No, father Micou."

"It cannot be *ravage*.* You are too large now; you do not work at that trade any more. It is, perhaps, iron."

"No, father Micou, it is copper, four pigs of it, at least a hundred and fifty pounds; it is as much as my dog can do to draw it."

"Go and bring it in: let us weigh it."

"You must help me, father Micou, for my arm is lame." The countenance of the bandit seemed to express a feeling of hatred and satisfied vengeance, as this association called to his mind his fight with his brother.

"What is the matter with your arm, my boy?"

"Nothing but a sprain."

"You must get a red-hot iron and dip it into water, and put your arm into it while the water is almost boiling; it is the remedy of an old ironmonger, but it is excellent."

"Thank you, father Micou."

"Well: come after the copper, I will help you, lazy fellow."

* Fragments of metal which the ravageurs picked up.

In two trips, the pigs were brought from a cart drawn by an enormous bull-dog, and taken into the shop.

"That cart of yours is a good idea," said father Micou, arranging a wooden scale, suspended from the beams of the ceiling.

"Yes: when I have anything to carry about the city, I put both dog and cart into my boat, and when I land I harness him. A hackman might talk, but my dog doesn't talk."

"And did you leave them all well at home?" asked the receiver, while weighing the copper. "Are your mother and sister in good health?"

"Very well: thank you."

"And the children also?"

"Yes; the children also. And your nephew, Andrew, where is he?"

"Don't mention him: he was drunk yesterday; Babillon and the big cripple brought him home this morning; he is off now on an errand to the principal post-office rue Jean Jacques Rousseau. Is your brother Martial a wanderer still?"

"Upon my faith, I do not know."

"How? You do not know?"

"No," said Nicholas, assuming a look of indifference; "I have not seen him for two days. He has perhaps returned to poach in the woods; unless his boat, which was old and rotten, has sunk in the middle of the river, and himself with it."

"It wouldn't affect you much, ugly fellow: you never could bear your brother."

"That's true. Everybody has his own notions. How many pounds are there?"

"Your eye is good; a hundred and forty-eight pounds, my boy."

"And you will owe me?"

"Thirty francs, exactly."

"Thirty francs! when copper is worth one franc per pound."

"I'll say thirty-five francs, and not a sous more, if you go to the devil—yourself, cart, copper, dog and all."

"But, father Micou, you shave me a little too close; there is no reason in it."

"If you will prove to me that the copper belongs to you, I will give you fifteen sous a pound."

"Always the same song; you are all alike; a crowd of brigands! How can you skin your friends in such a manner? But this is not all: if I take goods in exchange, you will be more liberal, perhaps."

"To be sure. What do you want? chains or hooks for your boats?"

"Neither. I want four or five sheets of iron, very stout, thick, and strong; suitable, as one might say, to line window-blinds with."

"I have just what you want, one-third of an inch thick: a pistol bullet couldn't pierce it."

"That's what I want, precisely."

"Of what size?"

"Seven or eight feet square."

"Good! What else do you want?"

"Three iron bars, four feet long and two square inches thick."

"I demolished, the other day, the bars of a window, that will fit you like a glove. What else?"

"Two strong hinges, with a latch, to open and shut a sort of small door, two feet square."

"A trap, you mean."

"No: a kind of valve."

"I can't understand what use you have for a valve."

"That's very possible; but *I* do."

"Very well, you can select for yourself: I've got a heap of hinges there. What else do you want?"

"That's all. Prepare all my goods immediately, father Micou: I will call and take them when I come back. I have some other errands to do."

"With your cart, I suppose. Look here, you rogue! I saw a bundle in the bottom of it; some tit-bit, I suppose, that you picked up from the sideboard *of all the world*."

"Just as you say, father Micou; but you do not eat such things. Do not make me wait for my goods, for I must return to the island by noon."

"Be easy: it's only eight o'clock. If you don't go far, you can return in an hour, and money and goods will both be ready. Will you take a smile?"

"Of course. You owe me one, I think."

Father Micou took from an old closet a bottle of brandy, a cracked glass, and a cup without a handle; and the beverage was poured out.

"Your health, father Micou."

Your own, my boy; and that of the *ladies* of your family."

"Thank you. How prospers the *garni*?"

"So-so: I have always some lodgers upon whom I fear a descent of the police; but they pay accordingly."

"What do you mean?"

"What a fool you are! Sometimes, I take in lodgers just as I buy goods: I think no more of asking a passport from them, than I should a bill of sale from you."

"I understand: you make them pay dear, for the same reason that you force me to sell cheap."

"We must all earn our living. A cousin of mine keeps a splendidly furnished house in the rue Saint Honoré; and his wife is also a considerable of a mantuamaker, and employs twenty girls, either in her own house or at their rooms."

"There must be some pretty ones among them, you old rogue!"

"Certainly; there are two or three of them who are rather tempting, particularly one little one who works at her own room, and who laughs day in and day out: they call her Rigolette. My eyes! boy, if I was only thirty years younger!"

"Well done! old chap. Cool yourself, or I shall cry out fire."

"But she is well-behaved and honest, my boy."

"She's a simpleton, perhaps; but what did you say about your cousin?"

"He keeps a very nice house, and belongs to the same class with Rigolette."

"Honest?"

"Just so."

"What a fool!"

"He only takes in lodgers that are able to show a passport,* but if some apply who have none, he knows that I am less scrupulous, and sends them to me."

"And they pay accordingly?"

"Of course."

"But, do all who have no passports, belong to the tribe of thieves?"

"By the way, my cousin sent me the other day a customer, whom 'twould puzzle the devil to understand. Let us take another smile."

Agreed; the liquor is excellent. Your good health, father Micou."

"Yours, my boy. I was saying, that my cousin sent me the other day a customer, whose situation, I for one, cannot comprehend. Just imagine a mother and daughter, who look as poor and rusty as if they had escaped from prison, carrying all they own in the world in a handkerchief. Well; they cannot be anybody because they have no passports, and are taking lodgings from fortnight to fortnight, and have not stirred since they have been here, no more than dormice, nor has any one called to see them; no, not a soul; and yet, if they were not so pale and pinched up, they would be fine looking women, the daughter, in particular. She is no more than fifteen or sixteen years of age, pale as a white rabbit, with large wide black eyes. Gemini, what eyes!"

"You will catch fire again, old sinner. What do these two women employ themselves about!"

"I tell you, that is what I don't comprehend. They must be honest, and yet they have no papers. They receive letters without any direction. Their names must be unpleasant to write."

"How is that?"

"They sent my nephew, Andrew, this morning to the post-office, to inquire for a letter that was to come from Aubiers in Normandy, directed to Madam XZ. They wrote it upon a small scrap of paper, so that Andrew might obtain the letter by giving the information. You see they can't be anybody, or they would not take the name of an X and a Z instead of the name of some family."

"They never will pay their rent."

"An old monkey like me can't be taught any new grimace. You can't catch this bird with such chaff. They have a small room without any fire-place, for which I have made them pay fifteen francs in advance. They are sick, perhaps, for they have not been down stairs for two days. They cannot be sick from over-eating, for they have had no fire to cook by since they have been in my house. Nobody calls upon them, and they have no papers."

"You would do a poor business, if you always had such customers, father Micou."

"Oh, my tenants come and go. If I lodge some people without passports, I lodge others that are well off in the world. I have, at present, two travelling clerks, a post-office carrier, the orchestra leader of the cafe dès Avengles, and a woman

* A penalty is inflicted upon any landlord in Paris, who receives a guest into his house who cannot produce a passport, signed by the Commissary of Police.

who lives on her income, all excellent people. They alone would save the reputation of my establishment, should the police be particular in their inquiries. They are not night tenants; they come out in broad sunshine."

"Whenever any sunshine gets down into this alley, you mean, father Micou."

"You are a funny chap. Let 's take another drop."

"Very well; but it must be the last. It 's time that I was off. By the way, Robin, the big cripple lodges here still, does he not?"

"Up stairs, next door to the mother and daughter. He's running through his prison money fast. I don't think he has got much left."

"You had better take care of yourself: he is under sentence."

"I know it, but I cannot get clear of him. I believe he is planning some job. Little Tortillard, the son of Bras-rouge, came after him the other evening with Barbillon. I fear that this cursed Robin will ruin all the rest of my tenants; and after his fortnight has expired, I will tell him that his room is engaged by an embassador, or by the husband of Madam Saint Ildefonse, the lady who lives on her income."

"What! Does she live on her income?"

"To be sure. Three rooms, and a small chamber in front, with a room in the garret for her servant, all newly furnished throughout, at eighty francs a month, paid in advance by her uncle, to whom she gives up one of her rooms whenever he comes from the country. However, I think that his country-seat may be in rue Vivienne, or in rue Saint Honoré, or that honest vicinity."

"I understand: she lives on an income which he furnishes to her."

"Hold your tongue; here is her servant."

A woman of advanced years, wearing an apron of dirty white, now entered the shop.

"What can I do for you, Madam Charles?" asked father Micou.

"Is your nephew at home, father Micou?"

"He has gone to the post-office, but will return soon."

"Mr. Badinot would like to have him take this letter as directed. There is no answer expected, but it must be done immediately."

"In a quarter of an hour he will take it, madam."

"He must go in a hurry."

"Depend upon it."

The servant now disappeared.

"Is that the servant of your lodger, father Micou?"

"No, you fool. It is the servant of the rich lady, Madam Saint Ildefonse. Mr. Badinot is her uncle. He arrived yesterday from the country," said the landlord, examining the letter; and then added reading the address: "Just see what fine acquaintances they have; they are tip-top people. He writes to a Viscount."

"No!"

"Look for yourself. '*Viscount de Saint Remy, rue de Chaillot, in great haste for himself personally.*' I think that, when I have rich ladies whose uncles are in correspondence with Viscounts, I need not feel ashamed of having some lodgers in the fifth story, who are without passports."

"So I think. Well: I'll see you again, very soon, father Micou. I'll fasten my dog to your door, and take my bundle on my shoulders: prepare my goods and my money, that I may be right off."

"Be easy. Four pieces of good sheet-iron, two feet square; three iron bars, three feet long; and two hinges, for a valve. The valve appears very singular to me, but never mind. Is that all?"

"Yes: and my money?"

"And your money! But look here: before you go, I must tell you that I have been watching you since you came in."

"Well: what of it?"

"I do not know; but something must be the matter with you."

"With me?"

"Yes."

"You must be crazy. Nothing is the matter with me, except that I am hungry."

"Hungry? It may be; but you look as if you wished to appear gay, while there is something inside which pinches, as it were, *smarts*—a sort of flea on your conscience, as people say; and if *you* feel it, the bite must be pretty sharp; for your conscience is none of the tenderest."

"I'll tell you, father Micou, that you are crazy," said Nicholas, shuddering, in spite of himself.

"I should also say, that you shuddered this very moment."

"The reason was, that I had a tinge of pain in my arm."

"Do not forget my remedy; it will cure you."

"Thank you, father Micou, I will see you soon;" and the bandit departed.

The receiver was engaged in concealing the pigs of copper, and collecting together the various articles which Nicholas had ordered, when a new character entered the store. He was a man of about fifty years of age, with a shrewd and cunning countenance, and thick gray whiskers, extending entirely around his face, with gold spectacles upon his nose, and genteelly dressed. The wide sleeves of his brown overcoat, with cuffs of black velvet, disclosed the straw-colored gloves that covered his hands, while the varnish upon his boots, though evidently hesternal, was still unsoiled and brilliant. Such was Mr. Badinot, the uncle of Madam Saint Ildefonse, whose distinguished social position was the pride of father Micou. The reader will recollect that Mr. Badinot, who was once an attorney, but had been thrown over the bar on account of malpractice, had now become a *chevalier d'industrie*—an agent in equivocal matters; and served, among his various other capacities, as agent to the diplomatist, the Baron de Graün; and had furnished him with frequent and precise information, concerning many characters in this narrative.

"Madam Charles has just given you a letter, I believe," said Mr. Badinot to the landlord, "to be conveyed as directed."

"Yes, sir: my nephew will come in within a few moments and take charge of the letter."

"I do not wish it; I have changed my mind; give me the letter; I will go myself and call on the Viscount de Saint Remy," said Mr. Badinot, laying great stress upon the asistocratic designation.

"Here is the letter, sir. Have you any other commands?"

"No, father Micou," said Mr. Badinot, in a patronizing manner, "but I have some reproaches."

"Against me, sir?"

"Yes: very serious reproaches."

"How so, sir?"

"Does not my niece, Madam Saint Ildefouse, pay a heavy rent for her rooms; and does she not, therefore, deserve the greatest attention? She came here, with perfect confidence that she would find this a quiet house, as she is disturbed by the noise of carriages, and she expected to live here as quietly as in the country."

"And is it not as quiet here as in the country? You must know something of it, sir, as you are well accustomed to the country. It seems to me like a perfect hamlet."

"A hamlet? 'tis a pretty one! There is an infernal noise here all the time."

"I believe that it is impossible to find a quieter house in the city. A leader of the orchestra of the cafè des Aveugles, rooms above your neice; above him there is a travelling clerk, further up."

"I do not allude to those persons, they are quiet and well behaved people; my neice has no fault to find with them. But there is on the fifth floor, a large, disgusting, lame fellow, whom my niece met yesterday on the stairs in a state of beastly intoxication: he yelled like a wild savage, and my niece nearly fainted with affright. Do you think with such lodgers that your house is much like a hamlet?"

"I assure you, that I am only waiting for an opportunity to turn that big game-legged rascal out of doors; he has paid in advance for his last fortnight, or I should have kicked him out some time since."

"You should not have received him in the first place."

"With that one exception, I think that your niece can have no other cause of complaint. There is a post-office carrier, who is the very cream of good society; and the room next to that of the noisy cripple, is occupied by a woman and her daughter, who are quiet as mice."

"I tell you, once more, that Madam Ildefonse complains only of the big cripple: he is the perfect nightmare of this establishment, and I warn you that if he does not leave the house, every one else will."

"I will turn him out, depend upon it; I had determined to do so before you spoke to me."

"And you will do well; for if you keep him in it, your house will not stand long."

"That would not suit me at all; therefore, sir, you may look upon the big cripple as already gone, for he has only four days to remain in the house."

"That is much too long, but it is your own look-out. If the disturbance is repeated, my niece will leave the house."

"I will attend to it, sir."

"I inform you of this, sir, for your own interest. When I make up my mind the thing is settled," said Mr. Badinot, in his patronizing way, and left the shop.

It may be necessary for us to state, that the lady and the young girl alluded to in the last conversation, were the victims of the notary's cupidity; and we will now introduce the reader into the miserable room which they occupied.

CHAPTER VI.....THE VICTIMS OF AN ABUSE OF CONFIDENCE.

"When the abuse is punished, the mean penalty is twenty-eight francs fine."—Arts. 406 and 408 of the Penal Code.

"Charity in the soul teaches the distressed, is as meritorious as the charity which gives bread."

Let the reader imagine a small room on the fifth floor of the dark and gloomy house of the passage de la Brasserie. A pale and feeble light penetrates with difficulty into the narrow apartment, through a small window of a single frame, the dirty and cracked panes of which are patched with the same yellowish paper that covers the walls. Festoons of spiders' webs hang from the cracked ceiling, and the floor of broken brick reveals, in many places, the beams which support them. A white wood table, a chair, an old trunk without a lock, a cot with a mattress and sheets of unbleached cotton, and one brown woollen blanket, constitute the entire furniture of the apartment. On the chair is seated the Baroness de Fermont, and on the bed reposes Mademoiselle Claire de Fermont, the names of the two victims of the avarice of Jacques Ferrand. As the bed was extremely narrow, the mother and daughter used it alternately, dividing in that manner the hours of vigil and repose. The mother was tortured by too many inquietudes to find any relief in sleep, but they discovered in it some few moments of oblivion and repose. At this moment the daughter was asleep.

Nothing could be more touching than the picture of misery which was presented by the two females, whom the criminal cupidity of the notary had reduced to the utmost penury—females who had always been accustomed to the humble comforts which competency bestows, and to the consideration which is always yielded to an ancient and honorable name. The Baroness de Fermont was about thirty-six years of age, with a countenance expressive of an amiable and dignified character; with features that, though pale and care-worn, revealed the traces of former loveliness. Sorrow had already sprinkled with gray, locks that were once of raven blackness, and which, parted on the brow and smooth upon the temples, were twisted into a knot behind the head. Her dress of black was covered with large patches, and her brow was supported upon a hand, the elbow of which leaned upon the bed where her daughter was reposing, upon whose face she cast a glance beaming with all a mother's affection and agony. Claire is only sixteen, with a countenance as emaciated as that of her mother, and with her profile clearly defined against the gray cotton which covered a bolster filled with sawdust. The complexion of the fair being had lost all its bloom. Her eyes were closed in sleep, but the long dark fringes projected far on to her pallid and sunken cheek. Her lips, which were once moist and rosy, but now pale and parched, are sufficiently parted from each other to disclose the beautiful whiteness of her teeth. The rough texture of the cloth had indented with red marks the polished purity of the arms, shoulders and neck of the sleeping daughter of sorrow. From time to time her finely marked eyebrows closed tight together, as if in some convulsive struggle, produced by the painful nature of her dreams. Her countenance bore already the indellible traces of a disease which threatened to undermine her constitution, and bury her misery in an early grave.

It was for a long period, that the fountain of the mother's tears had been exhausted; and it was a dry, inflamed and feverish eye, which she cast upon her child. Day after day her form wasted, and her strength diminished, and she was, like her daughter, vested with all the premonitory symptoms of decay; but for fear of alarming her child, and concealing even from herself the ravages of disease, she struggled against the first attacks of her malady. Acting under the influence of similar motives, her daughter, in order to spare the heart of her mother, concealed also the extent of her sufferings. The victims of the same sorrows seemed to be the victims also of the same disease. There is a last, a final abyss in misfortune, when the most fearless and energetic characters shrink from contemplating the future as it is, close their eyes against the extent of their misery, and attempt to delude their own minds as to the true nature of the evils which beset them. To this fearful crisis the Baroness de Fermont and her daughter had now approached. To express the torture of that female during the long hours which she watched her sleeping child, as her mind reverted to the past, the present, and the future, would be to describe all that the deathless affection of the maternal heart is capable of suffering, from contrasting enchanting recollections with actual misery—would be to present fears the most agonizing, premonitions the most frightful, regrets the most bitter; despondency as unrelieved as the gloom of the grave, wrath the most holy against the author of such accumulated calamities; the earnest appeals to human aid, and importunate prayers for Divine mercy, such as can only gush from a mother's anguish, and occasional doubts against the justice of that Almighty Being, whose ear was deaf to a cry drawn from the depths of woe, and which must pierce the heavens: "*Lord have mercy! mercy upon my daughter!*"

"How cold she is now!" said the poor mother, touching, with her own frosty fingers, the icy brow of her child. "She is very cold, while an hour ago her face fairly burned with heat. It is a fever; happily, she does not know that she has it. Good Heaven! how frightfully cold she is! This blanket is very thin; I would put my shawl upon the bed, but if I remove it from the door, those intoxicated men will come again to peep through the cracks, or the key-hole, as they did yesterday. What a horrible house! If I had known what a class of people inhabit it, instead of paying a fortnight in advance, I should have sought some other lodgings. When people are without passports, they are rejected by all respectable landlords. At the time I left Angers in my own carriage, not esteeming it suitable for my daughter to travel by a public conveyance, could I believe—but it is truly infamous!" said she, leaving the sentence incomplete; "that since the notary has stripped us of everything, and reduced us to the most frightful misery I am unable to adopt any proceedings against him. Yes, had I money I would rescue the name of my noble brother from unmerited reproaches; it should not be said, that in despair he laid violent hands upon himself, after having squandered all my property and that of my daughter. But if the reputation of my brother is a sacred trust committed to my charge, the life and future prospects of my daughter are no less sacred; but I have no proofs against him, and all proceedings would be vain. What is awful—awful!" she repeated, after a moment's pause, "is, that at that time, wretched and desperate at the terrible fate which threatened me, I dared to accuse my brother to the notary, and give reasons against him, as if my sorrows could be relieved by having two names to curse. I am grieved at my odious suspicions against the most magnanimous of brothers. Oh! that notary! He is not aware of all the terrible consequences of his theft. He only thought to steal money; but he is putting to death two females by a slow fire! Alas! I dare not tell my poor child all my fears, lest I might alarm her; but I suffer terribly myself. I have a violent fever, and only sustain myself by a wild and unnatural energy. I feel in myself the germs of a dangerous disease. Yes; I perceive its approach; my lungs and my head are visited with the severest pains, and the symptoms are more alarming than I am willing to admit. If I was to be seriously ill! If I was to die! No, no!" exclaimed the unfortunate lady, "I will not—I cannot die! To leave Claire at the age of sixteen without resources, alone and abandoned in the midst of Paris! It can never be permitted. I am not sick, after all. What if I do feel some heat at my lungs? a heaviness in my head? It is all the result of cold, anxiety, and the want of sleep. Any one in my circumstances, would experience the same feeling; but there can be nothing serious in it. Come, come; away with weakness! It is by listening to such ideas; it is by allowing myself to become despondent, that will produce actual sickness. Ought I not to busy myself in attempting to find employment for my own hands, and those of my daughter? Ought I not to present myself to the man who gave us engravings to color?"

After a pause of a few minutes, Madame de Fermont continued, in a voice of indignation: "Oh! it was abominable! to give up that employment out of a false pride in regard to Claire; to throw away that wretched means of subsistence, because I did not wish that my daughter should go alone to work during the evening at his house! Perhaps we can find sewing or embroidery elsewhere. But when one has no acquaintances, how difficult it is to find work. I have recently made several attempts in vain. In such miserable lodgings as these, we cannot expect to inspire confidence; and yet, when the small sum that still remains, is exhausted, what shall we do? what will become of us! We shall have nothing left! No: nothing on earth! Not a farthing! And yet, I was once rich. I must not indulge these thoughts. They madden me. It is these frightful forebodings that have produced my indisposition; for I am not sick. I even think I have less fever," said the unhappy mother, feeling of her own pulse.

But, alas! the rapid and irregular pulsation, which she perceived under her dry and cold skin, dispelled, in an instant, all illusion. After a moment's pause, during which she was tho

prey to the most frightful despondency, she exclaimed, with bitterness:

"Just God! why are we thus tortured? What have we done, to merit such an untoward destiny? Was not my daughter the exemplar and model of innocence and purity? Was not her father the soul of honesty and honor? Have I ever forgotten a single duty of wife and mother? Why am I, and especially my poor child, foredoomed to be the victims of that reprobate? When I think, that were it not for the theft of the notary I should have no apprehensions in regard to the future, or concerning the fate of my daughter—that our only sorrow at the present moment, as we were seated comfortably under our own rooftree, and by our own fireside, would be on account of the unhappy death of my unfortunate brother—that within two or three years, all the holy instincts of my heart would be gratified by the marriage of Claire, when I should have found a man worthy of her beauty and excellence! Who would not have been proud of her hand? It was one of my dreams to surrender to her three hundred thousand francs at least; and have only reserved for myself a pension, which would have sufficed for my own support."

Reverting to the frightful contrast which this dream of maternal affection and pride presented, with the abject wretchedness to which they had been reduced by the iniquity of Jacques Ferrand; "but because, in the recesses of a wicked and cruel heart, a wretch, without one redeeming virtue, willed our ruin; I must submit, resignedly, to the misery, shame, disgrace, and death of my best beloved!

"If the laws allow such a crime to pass unpunished, I will not allow it; for if fate drives me to it, if I can find no other relief from the abyss into which he has plunged my child, I shall take vengeance into my own hands, and slay the monster! They may do with me what they please afterward; but all the mothers in the land will be on my side. My daughter! my daughter! Yes; to leave her alone—abandoned; that is my terror—that is the only reason why I am unwilling to die. This is the reason why I have not already slain that wretch. What would become of her? She is but sixteen, and the angels of heaven are not more pure! But her loveliness would throw temptations in her path, which it is excessively difficult for one so young to surmount; and when to these are superadded, abandonment, misery, famine, who can conjecture the hazards which will beset her path? into what an abyss she might fall! It is awful! The more I learn from actual experience the meaning of those words 'misery,' 'poverty,' the more frightful and endless appear the train of evils which attend them. To all, the sting of want is terrible; but it carries augmented venom with it, when it assails those who have been accustomed to the comforts of opulence; and I can never forgive myself for being unable, under the pressure of such wretchedness, to overcome my pride. I must see my own daughter in actual want of bread, before I can condescend to beg. What a coward I am!" continued she, with melancholy bitterness. "The notary has reduced me to beggary, and I must accustom myself to the habits of my new condition. I must forget those scruples, and that delicacy, which were becoming in my former situation. Now, to solicit alms for myself and daughter is a virtue; and if I cannot find employment, I must bring my mind to solicit the charity of others, since the notary has ordered it to be so. There is probably some skill, some art, in my new craft, which it is my duty to improve every occasion to learn. I will learn it; it is a trade like every other," she added, with a kind of delirious enthusiasm. "Yes; I think that I possess all that is necessary to excite sympathy; misfortunes which are horrible enough, surely, and undeserved. I have a daughter of sixteen, who is an angel. I should know how to extract compassion from that element of my wo. I will do it."

The Baroness de Fermont remained for a moment absorbed in these thoughts, and then continued with more calmness: "I have several times thought of soliciting employment; the good fortune of the servant to that woman who occupies the second floor, is what excites my envy the most. If I had her place, perhaps with the wages which it brings, I could supply the wants of Claire; perhaps through that woman's patronage I could find some employment for my daughter; she would still be able to remain in this house, and we should not be separated. What happiness it would afford me, if I could make such an arrangement? it would be too much joy, it would be the unreal bliss of a dream. But if I assume her place, that servant must be sent away: well, what of that? had they any scruples in robbing me, should I hesitate to rob her? My daughter before everything else on earth. How shall I arrange to introduce myself to that woman? by what means shall I supplant her servant? such a situation would be beyond my highest expectations."

Three violent knocks at the door, started Madam de Fermont from her seat, and aroused her daughter from her slumber.

"What can the difficulty be, my mother," exclaimed Claire, suddenly seating herself upon her bed; and she threw her arms around her mother's neck, who, frightened herself, looked with anxiety toward the door; "What can it be?" repeated Clair.

"I do not know, my child; calm yourself, 't was nothing but a rap; it may be an answer from the post-office."

The worm-eaten door now shook from the effects of violent knocks, which some one gave with the fist.

"Who is there?" exclaimed Madam de Fermont, in a trembling voice.

A rough hoarse voice responded, "You must be deaf, neighbor; hallo!"

"What do you wish, sir? I do not know you," said the Baroness, attempting to disguise the agitation of her voice.

"I am Robin, your next door neighbor; give me some fire to light my pipe; hurrah, be quick!"

"Good Heaven! it is the cripple who is always intoxicated," whispered the mother to her daughter.

"Look here, will you give me some fire?" sung out the man from the outside; "if you don't, I'll break down your old door, by thunder!"

"I have no fire, sir."

"You must have some lucifer-matches, every one has them; come, open your door."

"Retire from the door, sir."

"Will you open or not? once, twice."

"I beg of you to retire, or I will call for help."

"Once, twice, three times, will you not? Then go it;" and the wretch gave such a violent blow, that the door flew open, the miserable lock having parted from it.

The two females uttered a cry of terror. The Baroness, notwithstanding her weakness, rushed to meet the bandit ere he could place his foot in the room, and opposed his entrance.

"Sir, this is abominable! you shall not come in!" exclaimed the unhappy mother, holding with all her strength the half-open door; "I will call for help."

"What for? what for! should not neighbors be obliging to each other? why did n't you open the door? I should not have broken it open;" and then, with all the obstinacy of intoxication, tottering on his unsteady legs, said, "I will go in, I will go in; I won't go away, until I have lighted my pipe."

"I have neither fire nor matches: in the name of Heaven, sir, retire!"

"That is not true; you say so, that I may not see the little girl who is a-bed. Yesterday you stopped the holes in your door, she is pretty, and I want to see her. Take care of yourself, I'll smack your face if you don't let me come in; I must see the little girl and light my pipe, or else I will tear down everything, and you too."

"Help! help!" shrieked Madam de Fermont, as she felt the door giving away before a violent shove from the lame man's shoulder.

Intimidated by the cry, the man moved back a step, shook his fist at Madam de Fermont, saying to her, "I will pay you for this, depend upon it; I will come back to-night: I will take hold of your tongue, and you shall cry for help in earnest;" and the big cripple, as he was called at the island of the Ravageur, went down stairs uttering horrible oaths.

Madam de Fermont, fearing his return, and perceiving that the lock was broken, dragged the table against the door in order to barricade it. Claire was so much overcome by the scene that she fell back senseless upon her couch, attacked by a nervous fit. Madam de Fermont, forgetting her own fear, ran to the aid of her daughter; raised her in her arms, made her drink some water, and by dint of attention and caresses, succeeded in calming her, and as her senses gradually recovered, she said to her:

"Be calm, be comforted my child, the wicked man has gone away;" and added, with a tone of indescribable grief and emotion, "yes; it is that notary who is the first cause of all our sorrows, of all our torture!"

Claire looked around her with a gaze of surprise and terror.

"Be quiet, my child," exclaimed Madam de Fermont, embracing her daughter; "the miserable wretch has gone."

"But what if he was to come back? You cried for help and no one came! Dear mother, let us leave this house: I shall die from fear."

"How you tremble! you have a fever?"

"No, no," said the young girl, in order to soothe her mother, "it is nothing; it is only fear; it will soon be over. And how do you feel? Give me your hand. Good Heaven! how it burns! it is yourself who suffer, you wish to conceal it from me."

"Do not believe that. I feel better than ever; it is the emo-

tion which that man has produced that affects me thus. I was asleep upon the chair, and woke up the moment that you did."

"And yet, my dear mother, your eyes are very much inflamed."

"Of course: sleep upon the chair is not very refreshing, you know."

"Are you not unwell?"

"No, I assure you. How do you feel?"

"I am only slightly agitated. I entreat of you, mother, to leave this house."

"And where shall we go? You know how much difficulty we had in finding this miserable chamber, for unfortunately, we have no passport: and I have, besides, paid for fifteen days in advance. They would not return the money to us, and we have so small a sum left that we must hoard it as much as possible."

"Perhaps the Count de Saint Remy will give you an answer one of these days."

"I have now no hope, it is so long since I have written to him."

"Perhaps he never has received your letter. Why do you not write to him again? It is not very far to Angers; and we should receive his answer very soon."

"You know, my dear child, how painful it was for me to do it."

"What harm will it do? He is so kind, with all his roughness. He was also one of the oldest friends of my father, and our relation."

"But he is poor himself; his fortune is very small. Perhaps he does not answer, to spare himself the grief of refusing us."

"But perhaps he never has received your letter."

"But if he has received it, one of the two conclusions is inevitable: he is either too poor to aid us, or he no longer feels an interest in our welfare. Then why should we expose ourselves to the humiliation of a second refusal!"

"We have one hope yet. Perhaps they will bring us some favorable answer this morning."

"From the Count d'Orbigny?"

"The letter which you wrote to him was so simple, so touching; it explained in such moving language, our misfortunes, that he must have compassion on us. Indeed, something informs me that we should place confidence in him."

"He has no little reason to take an interest in us; he was acquainted with your father formerly; and I have frequently heard my poor brother speak of him, as a man with whom he was in intimate relations, before he left Paris, to reside in the country with his young wife."

"That is what causes me to hope. He has a young wife, whose sympathy cannot but be enlisted for us; and then one is able to accomplish so much good in the country. He might employ you as his housekeeper; and I could superintend the clothes. The Count d'Orbigny is so rich, and his establishment is so large, that there must always be a large demand for services."

"Yes: but we have such a small claim upon his interest."

"We are miserable."

"That is a sure title in the eyes of the charitable."

"Let us hope that the Count d'Orbigny and his wife are so."

"In case we cannot find relief from him, I will overcome my scruples, and write to the Duchess de Lucenay."

"The lady of whom the Count de Saint Remy spoke to us; and whose generosity, and kindness of disposition he so often extolled!"

"Yes: the daughter of the Prince de Noirmont. The Count was acquainted with her when she was quite young, and treated her almost as if she had been his own child. The Duchess must have numerous acquaintances; she might procure some situation for us."

"That is true, mother: but I fully appreciate the cause of your reserve toward her. But with the Count d'Orbigny, my father and uncle were personally acquainted."

"In case the Duchess will do nothing for us, I have one last resource."

"What is that, mother?"

"It is a feeble, and perhaps a very rash hope. But why should I not try it? The son of the Count de Saint Remy, is ——"

"He—the Count has a son?" exclaimed Claire, interrupting her mother, with astonishment.

"Yes, my child, he has a son."

"But he never mentioned him; he never came to Angers."

"It is true, and for reasons that you cannot know. The Count having left Paris fifteen years ago, has not seen his son since that time."

"Fifteen years, without seeing his father!"

"Alas! it is so. I should tell you that the son of the Count is very rich; and is very much courted and admired, in the best society."

"Very rich? But his father is poor."

"All the fortune of the son came from his mother."

"But what if it did! How can he desert his father?"

"His father would accept nothing from him."

"Why so!"

"That is another question which I cannot answer. But I heard my brother say, that all the world extolled the generosity of the young man. He must, therefore, be kindly disposed toward us. And when I inform him that my husband was the intimate friend of his father, perhaps he will condescend to take an interest in us. He has so many friends and acquaintances, that it will not be difficult for him to procure us employment."

"And we might ascertain through him, whether the Count de Saint Remy had not left Angers before you wrote him, which will be a satisfactory explanation of his silence."

"I believe, that the son and father have no correspondence together; but there will be no harm in making the application."

"Unless the Count d'Orbigny should give a favorable reply; and I confess that I have great confidence."

"Several days have already elapsed, since I wrote him explaining our misfortunes; and yet, thus far, I have received no response, although a letter mailed by four o'clock in the afternoon, reaches Aubiers the next morning. A reply has been due for five days."

"Perhaps, before replying, he is deliberating in what manner he can be most useful to us."

"May God listen to you, my child!"

"It seems to me very probable, mother; for if he had determined not to aid us, he would have written immediately."

"He may be unwilling to aid us."

"Can that be possible, mother! to refuse to write, and thus encourage us to hope for four days? for eight days? for when people are wretched, they are apt to be sanguine."

"Alas! my child, the evils with which people are unacquainted, make but little impression upon their hearts."

"But your letter?"

"My letter can give him but a very imperfect idea of our anxiety, our sufferings, our humiliation of every kind; neither can it explain to him our abject destitution of any means of existence, the horrible house in which we live, the frightful evils to which we are exposed, the lamentable prospect which threatens. But I will speak no more of it. You tremble, my child; you have been seized with a chill."

"No, mother: take no notice of it. But tell me, suppose we should be in want of everything—that the small sum in that trunk should be all spent—is it possible, that in a city so wealthy as Paris, we should both of us be allowed to perish from famine and misery, because a wicked man has robbed you of your fortune?"

"Speak no more of it, my unfortunate child."

"But tell me, if it can be possible?"

"Alas!"

"But why does God, who is omniscient and omnipotent, abandon us, who have never offended Him?"

"Do not indulge such thoughts, I beg of you, my child. I prefer to see you indulge groundless hopes, than to see you surrender yourself to such afflicting doubts. Come, comfort me with some of your innocent delusions: you know that I am too apt to yield to despair."

"Yes, yes; it is much better to hope. The nephew of the porter will soon return with a letter from the post-office. Another errand will have to be paid for from our small store, and through my fault entirely; for if my health had not been so feeble, we might have gone to the post-office, as we did the day before; but you would not leave me alone, and go yourself."

"How could I, my child? What would have happened, had you been alone when that wretch broke open the door!"

"Do not mention it, my mother: the very thought of it terrifies me."

At this moment, a rough knock was heard at the door.

"Heavens! it is the cripple again," exclaimed the unfortunate mother; and, under the influence of her terror, she pushed the table still closer to the door. But her fears vanished, when she heard the voice of father Micou.

"Madam, my nephew has just returned from the post-office, with a letter to N. Z. It comes from some distance. The postage is eight sous: including the errand, twenty sous."

"A letter from the provinces, mother! we are saved! It must be from the Count de Saint Remy, or the Countess d'Orbigny. Poor mother! you will no longer be in solitude, in trouble no longer on my account. God is just! God is good!" said the young girl; and a ray of hope lighted up her face.

"I am much obliged to you, sir. Give me the letter—give it quick," said the Baroness, hastily removing the table and taking the note.

"It is twenty sous," said the receiver, showing the letter, which was waited for so impatiently.

"I am going to pay you."

"Oh, madam, no haste about it. I am going into the attic: I will call for the pay in ten minutes, when I come back."

The landlord gave the letter to the Baroness de Fermont, and disappeared.

"The letter is from Normandy: it is marked Aubiers. It is from the Count d'Orbigny!" exclaimed the lady, examining the address: "Madam X. Z., Paris."

"Was I not right, mother? How my heart beats!"

"Our fortune or our fate is in this letter," said the Baroness, with a faltering voice, and pointing to the letter. Twice her trembling hands approached the seal to break it, but her courage failed her. How can we portray the terrible anguish of those who, like this unhappy mother, hang in suspense upon the contents of a letter? The burning and feverish anxiety of the gamester, whose last coin is hazarded upon a card, and who, with suspended breath and inflamed eye, awaits the decisive turn upon which depends his fortune or his ruin, can give but a feeble idea of this intense anxiety, of this momentous second. The soul within instantly soars aloft into the etherial regions of hope, or sinks into the profound abyss of despair, according to the tenor of the important missive. The mind passes through, by turns, emotions as diverse as intense—gratitude toward beneficence, or burning resentment against selfish indifference. When an appeal is made which merits compassion, those who relieve often, would relieve always; and those who always refuse would frequently administer relief, if they were aware how the hope of succor or the fear of rebuff—their own will, in short, has the power of sending a thrill of rapture, or a pang of despair, through the soul of the unfortunate being who implores their aid.

"What a weakness!" said the Baroness, with a gloomy smile, taking a seat upon her daughter's bed. "Once more, my dear Claire, I hold our fate in my hand: my mind yearns to know the contents, but I dare not break the seal; if it is a refusal, alas! I shall know it too soon."

"And should it prove to be a promise of assistance; if this small letter should contain good and consoling words, which should comfort us for the future, in promising us some humble employment in the house of the Count d'Orbigny, is not each minute we are in suspense a minute of happiness lost?"

"Yes my child; but if on the contrary?"

"No, mother, you are mistaken. I am sure that the letter contains welcome intelligence. When I told you that the Count d'Orbigny had so long delayed answering our letter, it was only to be able to announce that all the arrangements were completed for a favorable future. Permit me to see the letter, mother; I can discern from the inscription whether the news is good or bad. I am now sure of the welcome intelligence which it contains," said Claire, taking the letter; "this writing, plain, firm and honest, came from a generous hand, accustomed to administer relief to those who suffer."

"I beg of you, Claire, not to express such rash hopes, or I shall still be more fearful of breaking the seal."

"Oh, my dear mother! before you open it I can inform you of its contents. Hear me: 'Madam, your fate and that of your daughter is so worthy of interest, that I beg of you to come immediately to this place, if you are willing to superintend my establishment.'"

"I beg of you, once more, my child, to dismiss such idle hopes; the awakening from such a dream would be terrible," said the mother, taking the letter from her daughter's hand, and preparing herself to break the seal.

"Courage, courage!" said Claire, carried away by the sanguine feelings so natural at her age; "as for myself, I have no need of it, I am sure that the letter contains happy news. Will you not let me open the letter? Let me read it; give it to me if you are afraid."

"Well, I prefer that you should open it; but no, no! it is better that I should do it;" and with great anxiety the Baroness de Fermont broke the seal. Her daughter was deeply agitated in spite of her apparent cheerfulness: she held her breath.

"Read aloud, mother," said she.

"The letter is not long. It is from the Countess d'Orbigny," said the Baroness, looking at the signature.

"So much the better; the news which it conveys is so good, that the excellent young woman wished to write it herself."

"We shall see;" and the Baroness read the following, in a trembling voice:

"'Madam: The Count d'Orbigny has been so indisposed, that he was unable to reply to your letter during my absence.'"

"You see, mother, that I was not at fault."

"Listen, listen!"

"'I returned this morning from Paris, and I hasten to write to you, after having conferred with the Count d'Orbigny concerning your letter. He has but an imperfect recollection of the relations which you suppose existed between himself and your brother. Your husband's name, madam, is not entirely unknown to the Count d'Orbigny, but he cannot recall the circumstances under which he heard it mentioned. The pretended spoliation, of which on such feeble evidence you accuse Mr. Jacques Ferrand, whom it is our good fortune to employ as a notary, it appears to the Count d'Orbigny as a cruel calumny, the importance of which seems to be imperfectly appreciated by you. Both my husband and myself, madam, know and admire the remarkable probity of the respectable and pious man whom you so blindly attack. In short, madam, the Count d'Orbigny, sympathizing certainly in the unpleasant situation in which you are placed, and feeling that it does not belong to him to search out the true cause, finds it impossible to afford you any assistance. Be pleased, madam, with the expression of the Count d'Orbigny's regrets, to receive the assurance of my most distinguished sentiments. COUNTESS D'ORBIGNY.'"

The mother and daughter looked at each other with indescribable feelings of amazement, without being able to open their lips.

Father Micou now came to the door: "I have come, madam, for the postage and the errand—twenty sous."

"Oh! it is such good news, that it is certainly worth what would suffice for our support for two days!" said the Baroness, with a bitter smile, and leaving the letter upon the bed, and going to the trunk without a lock, and opening it.

"We have been robbed!" exclaimed the unfortunate woman in affright. "There is now nothing—nothing left!" she added, in a mournful voice; and overcome with her feelings, she leaned upon the trunk.

"What do you say, mother? has the bag of money disappeared?"

The Baroness rising suddenly went out of the room, and confronting the receiver, addressed him.

"Sir," said she with a fiery eye and cheeks which were flushed with indignation and affright, "I had a bag of money in that trunk; some one stole it day-before-yesterday, when I was absent for an hour with my daughter; that money must be restored, do you hear? you are responsible for it."

"You have been robbed? that is not true: my house is an honest house," said the receiver, harshly; "you say that so as to escape paying the postage, and for the errand."

"I tell you, sir, that the money was all that I possessed in the world; it must be restored to me or I will enter a complaint. I will spare nothing, I will respect nothing, and I give you due warning."

"That would be a fine course for one to adopt who has no passport; go and complain, go immediately: I defy you!"

The unhappy woman was overpowered. She could not go and leave her sick daughter, especially after the inroad and the threats of the big cripple, and the menacing language which the ironmonger used.

The man continued: "It is a mere pretence; you no more had a bag of silver, than you had a bag of gold; you do not wish to pay for the postage and the errand. Never mind; when you pass before my door, I will pull your old black shawl from your shoulders; it is threadbare enough, but it is worth twenty sous."

"Oh! sir!" exclaimed the Baroness, bursting into tears, "for God's sake, have pity on us; that small sum was all that my daughter and myself had left in the world; that being stolen, there is nothing before us but death by starvation."

"How can I help it? if it be true that you have been robbed, which appears to me rather doubtful, the money has gone where we can't find it."

"Good Heavens!"

"The fellow who has got it, was not fool enough to mark the coin, or to stay here to be caught, if any one in the house has stolen it—which I don't believe, because, as I was saying to the uncle of the lady on the third floor this morning, the house is a perfect hamlet—if you have been robbed, it is a misfortune you might complain one thousand times and never get a cent back, and will be no better off; but," exclaimed the receiver, "what ails you? you turn pale! take care, mademoiselle, your mother is fainting," added the receiver, advancing in time to support the unhappy woman, who, overwhelmed by this last blow, fainted

away. The ferocious energy which had so long sustained her, yielded to this last misfortune."

"Mother! mother! what is the matter, mother?" exclaimed Claire, still in bed.

The receiver, vigorous in spite of his age, touched by a momentary feeling of compassion, took the Baroness in his arms, pushed with his knee the door of the room in order to enter, and said:

"Mademoiselle, excuse me, if I enter the room while you are in bed, but I am compelled to bring in your mother who has fainted away: it cannot last long."

Seeing the man enter, the poor child uttered a cry of terror, and concealed herself as well as she was able under the bedclothes.

The ironmonger placed the unfortunate lady on the chair by the side of the cot and retired, leaving the door ajar, as the lock had been broken off by the cripple.

One hour after this last shock, the violent sickness which had so long threatened the Baroness, burst forth. She was the victim of a burning fever and frightful delirium, and was lying on the bed of her daughter, who was shedding tears of desperate grief—almost as sick as her mother—without any money or resources, and constantly exposed to an assault from the bandit who occupied an adjoining apartment.

CHAPTER VII.....THE RUE DE CHAILLOT.

We will anticipate, for a few hours, the arrival of Mr. Badinot, who, from the passage of the Brasserie, was going in haste to the Viscount de Saint Remy. The nobleman, as we have already stated, lived in the rue de Chaillot. He occupied an elegant little mansion, built between a yard and a garden, in that retired quarter, although in the immediate neighborhood of the Champs Elysees, the most fashionable promenade in Paris.

It is useless to describe the advantages which the Viscount de Saint Remy—a man to whom the goddess of Love was very benignant—derived from a situation which was so admirably adapted to his favorite pleasures. The fair ladies who honored him with their visits, were able to enter his mansion very privately, through a small door of his vast garden, which opened upon a deserted alley, that led from rue Marbœuf to rue de Chaillot. By a fortunate coincidence, one of the finest horticultural establishments in the Capital had also, in that same passage, an entrance which was seldom frequented; so that the mysterious visitors of the Viscount had a very plausible and pastoral pretext for adventuring into this obscure alley. They were going, they could say, to select some rare flowers from the beautiful green-houses of this celebrated florist. Nor would the equivocation be entirely false, for the Viscount—himself gifted with a taste for every fashionable luxury—had a delightful conservatory which ranged along the alley to which we have alluded. A small private door opened into this winter-garden, which was contiguous to a boudoir, (we beg pardon for using the term,) that was situated on the lowest floor of his mansion. We can say, without metaphor, that a female who entered the house of the Viscount, by this avenue, was treading a flowery path; for the passage was lined, particularly in winter, with plants that were covered with most fragrant blossoms. The Duchess de Lucenay, who was as jealous as women of her temperament usually are, had insisted upon retaining the key of this door.

We have been thus particular in our details respecting this singular habitation, in order to convey, at least, a vague idea of one of those degraded beings, who are now happily becoming more and more rare; but to which we are bound to allude as one of the peculiarities of this epoch—a being whom, for want of a more precise term, we shall be obliged to designate as a male courtesan. The interior of the Viscount's mansion presented a singular appearance; or rather, the house was divided into two distinct parts. The lower floor, where he received his fair visitants; and the upper one, where he welcomed his cronies of the gaming table and the turf. In the former division was a sleeping apartment, furnished with gold plate, mirrors, flowers, satin and lace—a small music-room, provided with a harp and piano, for the Viscount was a capital performer upon both—a cabinet, devoted to paintings and curiosities, the boudoir which communicated with the conservatory—a drawing-room, designed to accommodate two, which was served by means of a dumb-waiter—a bathing-house, furnished with all the appliances of oriental luxury and refinement, and a small library, composed chiefly of the volumes which La Metterie had selected for Frederick the Great.

It would be superfluous to state, that all these rooms were decorated with exquisite taste, and with a sumptuousness worthy of Sardanapalus; they abounded with choice ornaments by Vatteau; rare works of Boucher; groups of Clodion in plaster, jasper, and antique marble; some precious copies of the prettiest figures of the Musée, in white marble. In addition to this, the windows opened, in the summer time, upon the thick and verdant foliage of the garden, overloaded with the most beautiful and fragrant flowers, through which flowed a small stream of water, that fell from a rural rock, like a fold of silver-gauze, dashing its sparking and pearly waves into a transparent basin, where two beautiful swans floated gracefully. And when cool and calm night approached, what perfume stole from these fragrant groves, which served, as a canopy to sofas made of rushes or Indian mats! In the winter, on the contrary, everything but the conservatory, was closed in. Window shades of transparent silk, and curtains of lace, imparted a soft and mysterious light to the apartment; while the furniture was covered with vases, overflowing with exotic flowers. In this silent retreat, embalmed with the perfume of the rarest plants, adorned with the voluptuous creations of the pencil, you inhaled a Paphian atmosphere; and the soul and senses were bathed in a delightful languor. To add to the perfection of a temple which was dedicated to Venus, its presiding priest was a young, elegant, and accomplished being, by turns witty and tender, gay and romantic, whom the Muses and the Graces had both adorned; fascinating in face and figure; endowed with one of those musical voices, which no female can resist; ardent, eloquent, passionate. Such was the Viscount de Saint Remy.

In ancient Athens he would have been admired, exalted, and deified like Alcibiades; in our days and at the present epoch, he was a disgraced forger, a miserable swindler.

The second floor of the Viscount's mansion, had a much less effeminate appearance. It was there that he received his numerous friends, who were all connected with the best society. The furniture here, was simple and severe; its ornaments were beautiful arms, and pictures of race-horses, which had won for the Viscount the numerous gold and silver cups which stood upon the different pieces of furniture; the smoking-room and the gaming apartment, adjoined a cheerful dining-saloon designed for eight persons, the precise number of guests in every studied dinner. Here this select party had often eulogized the faultless excellence of the Viscount's cook, and appreciated the choice wine with which his cellar was stored, before contesting with him some obstinate game of whist, upon which five or six hundred louis were staked, or before shaking the infernal dice.

Having thus exposed these two distinct divisions of the Viscount's establishment, will the reader now proceed with us into the more private recesses, and have the kindness to accompany us into the yard devoted to the carriages, and ascend a small staircase which leads to the comfortable apartment occupied by Edwards Patterson, the head groom of the Viscount's stables. The illustrious driver had invited to breakfast the confidential valet of the Viscount. A very pretty English maid, having retired after bringing in the silver teapot, the two distinguished individuals were left alone.

Edwards was about forty years of age, and never did a driver's seat groan beneath the weight of a more imposing rotundity; never did a white periwig surmount a more rubicund visage; never was there a more perfect master of a four-in-hand. He was as excellent a judge of horses as Tattersale of London, and as skillful a trainer as the renowned old Chiffrey. He united the rare combination of being an excellent whip, and excellent trainer of steeds designed for the turf. When Edwards did not display his sumptuous livery of brown and silver on his box, decorated with the arms of his master, he resembled much an honest English farmer. It is under that garb that we now present him to the reader; adding, however, that under his broad and red face could be distinctly observed the sharp cunning of the horse-jockey.

Mr. Boyer, his guest, the confidential valet of the Viscount, was a tall, slender man, with smooth gray hair, and a bald head, with a sly, discreet, and reserved expression. He used very select language, his manners were easy and polite, slightly learned, conservative in his political opinions, and could sustain admirably his part in a quartet on the violin by amateur performers. He took, in the most approved fashion, a pinch of snuff from a gold box ornamented with pearls, and with the back of his hand, as smooth as his master's, shook negligently the ruffle of his fine linen shirt.

"Do you know, my dear Edwards," said Boyer, "that your maid, Betty, cooks plain dishes in an admirable manner?"

"Upon my word, she's a good girl," said Edwards, who spoke French fluently; "and I mean to take her with me when I remove my establishment, that is if I determine to do it; and now

that we are alone, suppose we talk of business, as you are quite a business man."

"I am so," said Boyer, indifferently taking a pinch of snuff; "it is a trade very readily learned, when you manage the business of other people."

"I have to ask your advice upon quite an important matter, which is the reason that I invited you to come and take a cup of tea with me."

"I am at your service, my dear Edwards."

"You know that in addition to my interest in the race-horses, I made an arrangement with the Viscount, for the complete support of his stables, animals and men; that is to say, eight horses and five or six grooms and jockeys, at the rate of twenty-four thousand francs a year, including my own salary."

"That was reasonable."

"For four years, the Viscount paid me punctually, but about the middle of the last year he said to me: 'Edwards, I owe you about twenty-four thousand francs; now what do you estimate the worth of my horses, carriages, &c.?' 'The eight horses,' said I, 'cannot be sold for less than three thousand francs each, and they are cheap at that price.' That was true, Boyer; for five hundred guineas had been paid for the carriage horses. 'It will make them,' I said, 'twenty-four thousand francs; as for the carriages, there are four which are worth twelve thousand francs; which, added to the value of the horses, make thirty six thousand francs.' 'Well,' said the Viscount, 'buy the whole establishment of me at that price, on condition that you support out of the twelve thousand francs which you will owe me, the horses and people, and leave them at my disposal for six months.'"

"And you wisely accepted the bargain, for 't was a golden offer."

"Certainly, within two weeks the six months will be up, and I shall become the proprietor of the horses and carriages."

"Nothing is more simple; the contract was drawn up by Mr. Badinot, the Viscount's agent; what advice of me do you need?"

"What shall I do with the establishment? Shall I sell the horses and carriages, as the Viscount is about to depart; and everything will sell well, for he is known all over Paris as a crack man? or shall I establish myself as a horse-dealer, with my present stud, which would make a capital start?—in short, what do you advise?"

"I advise you to do the same thing which I shall do myself."

"What is that?"

"I find myself very much in the same situation in which you are."

"You!"

"The Viscount hates details. When I entered his service I had, from my savings and my patrimony, about sixty thousand francs. I assumed the expenses of the household, as you did those of the stable, and about the same time with yourself, I found that there was about twenty thousand francs due me, and about sixty thousand to various dealers. The Viscount proposed to me, as he did to you, to sell to me the furniture of the house, including plate, which is very beautiful, pictures, &c., the whole valued, at the lowest price, at one hundred and forty-eight thousand francs, and as there was eighty thousand due, the balance was to be used by me until it was exhausted, for the expenses of the table, the wages of the servants, &c., and for nothing else; that was the condition of the bargain."

"You realized some profit from the expenses?"

"Necessarily; for I have made arrangements with providers, whom I shall not pay until after the sale," said Boyer, taking with gusto a pinch of snuff, "so that after the present month——"

"The furniture will be yours, as the horses and carriages are mine."

"Assuredly the Viscount has gained by the bargain; for during the whole of the period he has been able to live like a nabob in the very face of his creditors; for the plate, furniture, horses, carriages, had been bought for cash, when he came of age, and were legally transferred to you and myself."

"So then the Viscount will be ruined?"

"In five years."

"And how much did he inherit?"

"A beggarly little million, in cash," said Boyer indifferently, taking a pinch of snuff; "add to it, say, about two hundred thousand in debts: 't was quite passable. It was then, my dear Edwards, my intention to rent the house, elegantly furnished as it is, to some English people—linen, crockery, plate, conservatory, and all. Some of your countrymen would pay a good price for it."

"Undoubtedly; and why do you not do it?"

"I would; but what is not actually money, always runs some chances; therefore I have made up my mind to sell the furniture. The Viscount is so well known as a connoisseur in furniture and objects of art, that whatever comes from his house will bring a double price, and in that manner I shall pocket a round sum. Follow my example, Edwards: realize, realize, and do not adventure your earnings in any speculation. You are first coachman to the Viscount de Saint Remy, and all will be emulous of securing your services. I heard yesterday of a young sprig, just of age, the cousin of the Duchess de Lucenay, the young Duke de Montbrison. He has just arrived from Italy, with his tutor, and is about to set up his establishment. His income from real estate is two hundred and fifty thousand francs annually, and he is just entering life, only twenty years of age, full of confidence, with extravagant tendencies, and prodigal as a prince. I am acquainted with his steward, who told me all this in confidence; he has almost promised the situation of first valet, for he patronizes me, the simpleton!" and Mr. Boyer shrugged his shoulders, taking a good pinch of snuff.

"You expect to supplant him?"

"To be sure. He is but little better than a fool, and is also an impertinent puppy. He takes me into the establishment as if he had nothing to fear from me: within two months I shall be in his shoes."

"Two hundred and fifty thousand francs from real estate! that must be a capital house."

"I tell you there is something to be made out of it. I will speak of you to my patron," said Mr. Boyer ironically; "accept a place there; it is a fortune with long roots, and to which one can stick for a long time. It is not a beggarly million, like the Viscount's—a mere snowball. One ray of the Parisian sun melted it all away. I foresaw that I should only be here as a bird of passage. It is a pity; the style of this house was an honor to us, and until the last moment, I shall serve the Viscount with the respect and esteem which is his due."

"Truly, my dear Boyer, I am much obliged to you; I accept your proposition. I will propose to the young Duke the stable of the Viscount; it is all ready for his hands, and is known and admired throughout Paris."

"Certainly, certainly: you can make a fine trade out of him."

"But why don't you propose to him this establishment, which is so excellently provided with everything? what can he find that is better?"

"Certainly, Edwards, you are a smart man. I am not surprised at it; you have given me an excellent idea. We must speak to the Viscount; he is a kind master; he will not refuse to speak favorably of us to the young Duke. He can inform him that, as he is about to leave for the Gerolstein embassy, to which he is attached, he wishes to dispose of his whole establishment. Let us see: one hundred and sixty thousand francs for the house all furnished, plate and fixtures; fifty thousand francs for the horses and carriages; that makes from two hundred and thirty to two hundred and forty thousand francs. It is an excellent affair for a young man who wishes to set up a complete establishment. He would have to spend three times that sum before collecting so elegant and select a combination as we present: for we must confess, Edwards, that one knows how to live like the Viscount."

"No such judge of horseflesh."

"Nor any one who knows so well what a good table is. Godefroi, his cook, leaves this house a hundred times better artist than when he entered it: the Viscount has given him excellent advice, and refined his taste exceedingly."

"And they say, in the bargain, that the Viscount is a first-rate gamester."

"Excellent: winning large sums with more indifference than he loses; and yet I never saw a man lose with greater coolness."

"As for women, Boyer, women, you might tell some tough stories; you, who are the only one admitted to the lower floor."

"I have my secrets, as you have yours, Patterson."

"Mine?"

"When the Viscount ran his horses at the race, there were some confidential matters between you. I do not wish to attack the probity of your adversary's jockeys; but yet there were some reports——"

"Silence! my dear Boyer. A gentleman no more compromises the integrity of an antagonist's jockey, who had the weakness to listen to him——"

"Than a gallant man compromises the reputation of a female who has been kind to him. So I say, let us keep our secrets, or rather the secrets of the Viscount, my dear Edwards."

"Well, what will he do now?"

"Start for Germany with a good travelling carriage, and seven or eight thousand francs, which he will procure somewhere. I am in no trouble about the Viscount: he belongs to that class of people, who always come down on their feet."

"And has he no legacy to expect?"

"None; for his father is only just comfortable."

"His father?"

"Certainly."

"What! is not the father of the Viscount dead?"

"He was not dead five or six months ago. The Viscount wrote to him for certain family papers."

"But he never has been seen here."

"For a good reason: it is about fifteen years since he removed to Angers, in the provinces."

"But the Viscount never visits him?"

"His father, you mean?"

"Yes."

"No; never—never."

"Have they quarrelled?"

"What I am about to tell you, is no secret: I had it from the confidential agent of the Prince de Noirmont."

"The father of the Duchess de Lucenay," said Edwards, with a significant wink, which Mr. Boyer, faithful to his confidential situation and to his habitual reserve, did not choose to understand. He therefore said, indifferently:

"The Duchess de Lucenay is, indeed, the daughter of the Prince de Noirmont. The father of the Viscount was very intimate with the Prince. The Duchess was then a very young lady; and the Count de Saint Remy, who was very much attached to her, treated her as affectionately as if she had been his own daughter. I had these details from Simon, the confidential servant of the Prince. I can speak without any scruple; for the affair to which I allude, was at that time the talk of all Paris. In spite of his sixty years, the father of the Viscount is a man of an iron will, brave as a lion, and of very remarkable probity. He was a man of very small means, and married out of love the mother of the Viscount; a young woman who was rather rich, inasmuch as she possessed the million which we have had the honor of seeing melt;" and Mr. Boyer made an inclination of his head. Edwards returned the salutation.

"The marriage was very happy, it is said, until the father of the Viscount accidentally discovered some troublesome letters, which indicated, that during one of his absences, three or four years after his marriage, his wife had indulged a tender weakness toward a certain Polish Count."

"That is very frequently the fortune of those Poles. When I was with the Marquis de Senneval, the Marchioness, a passionate woman——"

Mr. Boyer interupted his companion: "You should know, my dear Edwards, the alliances of our high families before you speak incautiously; otherwise, you will get yourself into many scrapes."

"How so?"

"The Marchioness de Senneval is sister of the Duke de Montbreson, into whose service you desire to enter."

"The devil she is!"

"Just think, if you had spoken in this manner of her before envious or talkative people, you would not have remained twenty-four hours in the house."

"That is true, my dear Boyer. I will endeavor to make myself familiar with alliances."

"I will proceed: The father of the Viscount perceived, after fourteen or fifteen years of a happy wedded life, that he had some reasons to complain of a Polish Count. Fortunately, or unfortunately, the Viscount was born some nine months after the return of his father from this fatal journey, so that he was never perfectly sure of the legitimacy of our master. At all events, the Count de Saint Remy separated from his wife immediately after this discovery, and never would receive one sous of the property which she brought him. He retired into the provinces, with about eighty thousand francs, which he possessed. But you will see the obstinacy of the old man's diabolical temper. Although fifteen years had elapsed since the supposed insult, and one might conclude that it was outlawed, the father of the Viscount accompanied by Mr. de Fermont, one of his relatives, pursued the Polish swain, and finally caught him at Venice, after having hunted for him in every city of Europe for eighteen months."

"What an obstinate old fellow!"

"He cherishes a grudge like the devil. I tell you, my dear Edwards, at Venice a terrible duel took place, in which the Pole was killed. Everything proceeded honorably, but the father of the Viscount evinced such joy at seeing his antagonist mortally wounded, that his friend was obliged to drag him from the place of encounter. He wished, it is said, to see his enemy expire. The Count came to Paris, visited his wife, and informed her that he had killed the Pole, and departed. After that time, he would never see his son, and retired to Angers. He lives there, it is said, like a real hermit. The eighty thousand francs were somewhat broken in upon by his pursuit of the Pole. At Angers, he associates with no one, unless it is the wife and daughter of his relative, Mr. de Fermont, who died a few years ago. The family seems to be an unfortunate one, for the brother of Mr. de Fermont blew out his brains several months ago."

"And what became of the mother of the Viscount?"

"She died a long time since. That is the reason why the Viscount, when he became of age, took possession of his mother's fortune, so that you see that the Viscount has small hopes of any patrimony from his father."

"Who probably hates him?"

"He never wished to see him since the discovery just mentioned, fearing, I presume, that he was the son of the Pole."

The conversation was now interrupted by the appearance of a gigantic foot-boy, who, although it was scarcely eleven, was carefully powdered.

"Mr. Boyer, the Viscount has returned," said the giant.

Mr. Boyer appeared much disconcerted, probably for having neglected some of his duties. He arose as hastily as if he had not been the actual proprietor of his master's establishment.

CHAPTER VIII. ..... THE COUNT DE SAINT REMY.

"A month?—'t is very long!"
Goethe, *le Grand Cophte. Act I; Scene 2nd*

About two hours after Boyer had left Edwards to attend upon his master, the father of the Viscount knocked at the front gate of the house in the rue Chaillot. The Count de Saint Remy was a man of tall stature, alert and vigorous in spite of his years, and with a complexion of almost a copper hue, which was in strong contrast with the extreme whiteness of his beard and hair. His thick eyebrows still retained their original black and partly covered his piercing eyes, which were deeply sunk in their sockets. Although, in the spirit of misanthropy, he wore the most unostentatious apparel, there was an air of pride and dignity in his carriage, which insured respect. The gate of his son's house being open, he entered it. A porter in full livery of brown and silver, perfectly powdered, and with legs enveloped in silk stockings, showed himself at the threshold of an elegant lodge, which bore about as much resemblance to the smoked den of Mr. Pipelet, as the room of a woman who repairs old clothes to the elegant shop of a fashionable milliner.

"The Viscount de Saint Remy?" said the Count in a short tone.

The porter, instead of answering, directed a gaze of high-bred and contemptuous surprise to the white beard, thread-bare frock coat, and old hat of the unknown, who held in his hand a heavy cane.

"Viscount de Saint Remy?" said the Count, in a still more emphatic tone, astonished at the impertinent gaze of the menial.

"The Viscount is not in."

With this remark the porter pulled the door-string, and, with a significant gesture, indicated to the unknown that he could retire.

"I will wait for him," said the Count, and he passed in.

"Here, my friend; this is not the way to enter a house!" exclaimed the porter, pursuing the Count, and taking hold of his arm.

"How, rogue!" replied the old gentleman, raising his cane in a threatening manner; "do you dare to place your hand upon me?"

"I will dare do something else, if you do not depart instantly. I told you that the Viscount was not in, and you must go."

At this moment, Boyer, attracted by the voices, made his appearance on the portico of the house, and asked, "What is the noise?"

"Mr. Boyer, this old gentleman insists upon going in, although I told him that the Viscount was not at home."

"We will finish this," said the Count, speaking to Boyer. "I wish to see my son. If he has gone out, I will wait for him."

"If my lord, the Count, will follow me, I am at his service."

"Proceed," said the Count, who followed Boyer, to the great amazement of the porter. Attended by the valet, the father arrived on the second floor; his guide conducting him through the cabinet of Florestan, (by which name we shall hereafter call the Viscount to distinguish him from his father,) introduced him into a small parlor, adjoining the cabinet, and immediately over the boudoir on the first floor.

"The Viscount was obliged to go out this morning," said Boyer. "If my lord, the Count, will be so kind as to wait, I presume that he will soon be at home;" and the valet disappeared.

Left to himself, the Count gazed around with an eye of great indifference; but, upon a sudden, he started in surprise, while his face became animated, his cheeks flushed, and his brow contracted with anger. His eye had fallen upon the portrait of his wife, the mother of Florestan de Saint Remy. He folded his arms upon his breast; cast his eyes upon the floor, as if to escape from a disagreeable vision, and walked with hurried strides through the room.

"It is strange," said he: "that woman is dead; I have slain her lover, and my wound is as sharp and painful as on the first day of that terrible discovery. My thirst for vengeance is not yet extinguished; my wild misanthropy in forsaking society altogether, has left me face to face with the memory of that outrage. The death of her partner in guilt avenged my dishonor, but could not efface it from my recollection. What makes my hatred incurable, is the thought, that during fifteen years, I was her dupe; that during fifteen years, I lavished tenderness, affection, and esteem, upon the wretch who had so infamously deceived me; that I loved her son, the son of her crime, as if he had been my own—for the aversion with which Florestan now inspires me, proves clearly that he is no child of mine. And yet, there can be no demonstration of his illegitimacy; and the doubt is frightful to me. If he were my son, the neglect with which I have treated him; the aversion I have always manifested toward him; my constant refusal to see him, would be unpardonable. After all, he is rich, young, and happy. Of what use could I have been to him? But his affection might have softened the sorrows of which his mother was the cause."

After a moment's pause, the Count continued, shrugging his shoulders:

"Again I am indulging these foolish speculations, which can never have any other result than to revive all my pangs. Let me be a man, and stifle these emotions which I feel at the prospect of seeing him who, for ten years of my life, I loved with so much idolatry; whom I loved as my son. He, whom I fear is the son of the man whose blood, with so much joy, I saw following my sword; and whose dying agonies I was prevented from seeing. Oh! they knew not what it was to be afflicted as I have been. And the thought that my name, always respected and honored, should have become a by-word and derision; to think that my name belongs to the son of a man whose heart I could have torn out with pleasure! I do not know how my reason maintained its ascendency in the presence of such thoughts."

The Count de Saint Remy continuing to walk with great agitation, unwittingly raised the curtain which divided the cabinet from the parlor, and proceeded a few steps in the former apartment. He had disappeared for a moment, when a small door, concealed beneath the drapery, was slowly opened, and the Duchess de Lucenay, enveloped in a large shawl of green cashmere, and wearing on her head a plain black velvet bonnet, entered the parlor which the Count had just left. The day before, Florestan had appointed an interview with the Duchess for this morning; and she having a key, as we have said, to the private entrance, had as usual, passed through the green-house, with the expectation of finding Florestan in the apartments upon the first floor; but not meeting him there, she concluded that he, as he had frequently done before, had lingered in his cabinet, to complete some writing upon which he was engaged. A private staircase having been opened between the boudoir and the study, the Duchess ascended, with perfect confidence, supposing as usual, that Florestan had given orders to the porter to admit no one. She was about to enter the study, when the curtains were divided, and the Duchess found herself face to face with the Count de Saint Remy—the father of Florestan. She could scarcely restrain a cry of fear.

"Clothilde!" exclaimed the Count, stupefied with surprise.

An intimate acquaintance with the Prince de Norimont, the father of the Duchess, the Count had been in the habit of calling her by that familiar name when she was a child. The Duchess remained immovable, contemplating with surprise, the old gentleman with white beard, whose features she recalled with difficulty.

"You, Clothilde!" repeated the Count, with a painful accent of reproach; "you here in my son's house!"

The last words fixed her fleeting recollection; the Duchess recognized, at once, the father of Florestan, and exclaimed, "Count de Saint Remy!"

The position in which she was placed, was so palpable and significant, that the Duchess, with whose resolute and eccentric character, the reader is already acquainted, disdained any resort to falsehood to explain the singularity of her presence in Florestan's house, and, confiding in the parental fondness which the Count had formerly displayed, she extended to him her hand, and with a tone at once graceful, cordial, and bold, which was exclusively her own, said:

"Come, come, you are my oldest friend; remember that twenty years ago, you called me your dearest Clothilde."

"Yes, I called you so, but ——"

"I know already everything that you are going to say; you know my motto—what is, cannot be prevented; what shall be, will be."

"Ah! Clothilde, ——"

"Spare your reproaches, let me rather speak of my delight in seeing you again; your presence recalls a thousand things to my recollection: my dear father, in the first place, and my fifteenth year, in the second—what a delightful age!"

"It is because your father was my friend."

"Oh! yes," replied the Duchess, interrupting the Count; "he was warmly attached to you. Do you remember that I used to call you, in a laughing manner, 'the man with the green ribbons?' You used to tell him, 'you will spoil Clothilde;' but he would reply, kissing me, 'I believe that I shall spoil her, but I must be quick about it, for society will soon tear her from me, and spoil her in its turn.' "Excellent father! what a friend I lost in you." A tear glistened in the beautiful eye of the Duchess, and putting forth her hand to the Count, she said: "I am truly happy, very happy to see you, for you awaken recollections which are most pleasant and grateful to my soul."

Although the Count was well acquainted with the somewhat eccentric character and well established resolution of the Duchess, he was very much surprised at the delicacy and grace with which she entertained him, in the somewhat equivocal position in which he had discovered her.

"If you have been in Paris for a long time, it was very wrong in you," continued the Duchess, "not to come and see me before: we could have talked so much about the past; for do you know, that I have reached that age when old friends have a great charm for me."

The Duchess could not have been more at her ease, if she had been receiving a morning call at the Hotel de Lucenay.

"Instead of speaking of the past," replied her companion, "would it not be more suitable to speak of the present; my son may return at any moment, and ——"

"No," said Clothilde, interrupting him; "I have the key to the small door which leads to the conservatory, and his arrival is always announced by a bell which he rings, when he comes through the porter's gate; and at that signal I shall disappear as mysteriously as I came, and I will not disturb your first interview with him by my presence. What a delightful surprise you will afford him! You have forsaken him for so long a time, that I am the one who ought to reproach you."

"What! *you* reproach *me?*"

"Certainly: what guide, what counsellor, has Florestan had in starting in the world? Upon a thousand subjects, the advice of a father is indispensable; so that, frankly speaking, it was wrong for you to——" the Duchess could not restrain a burst of laughter at the manner in which she had changed the tables; and she said to the Count,

"You must admit, that there is a great deal of novelty in our respective positions, and that it is quite piquant to improve this opportunity to lecture you."

"I confess it is somewhat peculiar, but I neither deserve your censure nor your praise. I have called so see my son, but it is not for my son's sake; at his age, he can no longer need advice."

"What do you mean?"

"You must be acquainted with my reasons for detesting Paris," said the Count, with a painful and constrained expression; "nothing but circumstances of the greatest interest, could have drawn me from Angers, especially to this place, and to this house; but I have been compelled to conquer my repugnance, and resort to every individual who might assist in researches in which my heart is greatly interested."

"In that case," said the Duchess de Lucenay, with great eagerness, "I beg of you to command my services, if I can be of any use whatever; have you anything to solicit of the government? The Duke must have some influence, for the days when I dined with my great aunt de Montbréson, he gives a dinner to the deputies. He does not put himself to that inconvenience without some good motive; he wishes to gain some ascendency over people who have great influence in these times. If I can serve you in any manner, consider me as under your orders. There is also my cousin, the Duke de Montbréson, who is intimate with all the young peers. Can he do anything for you? In that case, I offer his services also; in one word, you can dispose of me and of everybody that I can command."

"I know it, and I do not refuse your assistance, although, however——"

"Come, my dear Alceste, we are people of the world, and let us act accordingly. Whether we are here or elsewhere, it

matters but little, I suppose, to the affair which interests you, and which is now of equal interest to me; and I insist upon talking about it in all sincerity." With these words the Duchess went near to the fire-place, and advanced toward it the prettiest foot in the world, which at that moment was very cold.

With perfect tact the Duchess avoided any further allusion to the Viscount, and confined the conversation to a topic to which the Count seemed to attach great importance. The conduct of Clothilde would have been different in the presence of the mother of Florestan; she would have acknowledged to her, with pride and happiness, how dear her son was to her. Notwithstanding the rigor and severity of the Count de Saint Remy's character, he was completely overcome by the ease and the grace of the woman whom he had loved so tenderly in her childhood, and he almost forgot the equivocal position which she now occupied. In what manner, moreover, could he resist the contagion of example, when she, who should have been most embarrassed with an interview under such circumstances, was more at her ease than the Count himself?

"Perhaps, Clothilde," he said, "you were not aware, that for a long time, I have lived at Angers!"

"Yes, I knew it."

"I was desirous of retirement, yet I selected that city as my residence, because Mr. de Fermont, who, at the time I was so grievously afflicted, behaved toward me as a brother, lived there. After having accompanied me to nearly all the cities of Europe, in pursuit of a man whom I desired to slay, he acted as my second in a duel."

"Yes, a terrible duel; my father told me of it formerly," said the Duchess with sadness; "but fortunately, Florestan knows nothing of the duel, nor the cause of it."

"I wished to have him respect his mother and her memory," said the Count, smothering a sigh. "A few years after," continued the father, "Mr. de Fermont expired at Angers, in my arms, leaving a daughter and a wife, who, in spite of my misanthropy, I was compelled to love, because no character in the world could be purer, nobler, or more exalted, than those of these excellent females. I lived alone, in a distant part of the city, but when I had emerged from my first sorrow at this great affliction, I went to see Madam de Fermont, to speak to her and her daughter of him whom they had so devotedly loved, as, during his life, I resorted to that society in which I had concentred all my affections, for consolation. The brother of Madam de Fermont resided in Paris, and superintended all her business affairs, and after the death of her husband, he deposited with a notary about three hundred thousand francs, which embraced the entire fortune of the widow. After a short time, a new and terrible misfortune befell Madam de Fermont; her brother, Mr. de Renneville, committed suicide about eight months since. I gave her every consolation in my power to administer, and after her mind was partially restored to tranquillity, she left for Paris, in order to arrange her business affairs. After a short period I learned that, by her orders, her furniture at Angers had been sold, and that the avails had been appropriated to the payment of some debts left by Mr. de Fermont. Alarmed at the circumstance, I sought for some explanation, and learned vaguely, that Madam de Fermont and her daughter were in the greatest distress, the victims, probably, of some bankruptcy. If Madam de Fermont could rely upon any one in such an extremity, it was me, and yet I received no letters from her. When I had lost this delightful intimacy, I fully appreciated its value. You can scarcely imagine the anxiety which I have suffered since the departure of Madam de Fermont and her daughter; the husband and the father had been to me as a brother. I determined to find them again, and I could not divine why, in their distress, they had not applied to me, poor as I am. I departed for Paris, leaving at Angers an individual who would inform me if he heard anything more concerning them."

"Proceed."

"Even yesterday, I received a letter from Angers, which informed me that no additional information had been received concerning them. Upon my first arrival at Paris, I commenced my researches; I made inquiries at the last residence of Mr. de Renneville, and learned that his sister and niece resided on the quay Saint Martin."

"And what did you learn at that house?"

"That they had once resided there, but had now left, and the people could not inform me whither they had gone. Thus far my researches have been in vain. After a thousand disappointments, before yielding entirely to despair, I had resolved to come here, thinking that, for some incomprehensible reason, Madam de Fermont might not have applied to me, but resorted to the son of her husband's best friend. My last hope was a very feeble one; but I was determined to neglect no possible resource, to find the unfortunate mother and daughter."

For several moments, the Duchess had listened to the Count with redonbled attention, and suddenly exclaimed:

"Indeed! it would be very singular, but it may be that your inquiries concern the same persons in whom the Marchioness d'Harville is interested."

"What persons are they?" asked the Count.

"The widow of whom you speak, is still young, with a countenance that is noble!"

"Certainly; but what do you know of her?"

"Her daughter is as beautiful as an angel, and about sixteen years of age?"

"Yes, yes!"

"And her name is Claire?"

"Oh! for Heaven's sake, tell me where they are!"

"Alas! I do not know."

"You do not know?"

"I will tell you what has given me this information. A lady of my acquaintance, the Marchioness d'Harville, came to ask me if I was not acquainted with a widow lady, whose daughter was called Claire, and whose brother had committed suicide. She had applied to me, because she had seen these words—'Write to the Duchess de Lucenay'—upon the bottom of a draft of a letter, which the unfortunate woman had addressed in her distress to some person unknown."

"Why could she have wished to write to you?"

"I know not. I am unacquainted with her."

"But she knew you," exclaimed the Count, inspired with a sudden thought.

"What do you say?"

"She has heard me a hundred times speak of your father, and of your noble and generous heart. In her distress, she thought of applying to you."

"It may be explained in that manner."

"And how did the Marchioness obtain possession of the letter?"

"I am ignorant. All that I know is, that she was desirous of finding the mother and daughter, and did not know where they had taken refuge."

"Then I shall rely upon you, Clothilde, to introduce me to the Marchioness: I must see her to-day."

"It is impossible. Her husband has just been the victim of a terrible accident: a pistol, which he did not know was loaded, accidentally discharged itself, and he was killed on the spot."

"What an awful event!"

"The Marchioness left instantly, to spend some time with her father in Normandy."

"Clothilde, I beg of you to write to her to-day: ask her for all the information which she possesses. If she takes an interest in these unfortunate females, she cannot find a more zealous auxiliary than myself. My only desire is to find the widow of my friend, and to share with her and her daughter the little which I possess; for they are now my only family."

"Always the same—always the same—generous and devoted. You may rely upon me; I will write this very day to the Marchioness d'Harville. Where shall I send my answer?"

"To Asnieres, to be left at the post-office."

"What a strange place of abode! Why don't you live in Paris?"

"I hate Paris, on account of the unpleasant associations which it revives," said the Count, with an expression of gloom. "My old physician, Dr. Griffon, with whom I have kept up a correspondence, owns a small country-seat on the banks of the Seine, near Asnieres; and as he does not occupy it during the winter, he proposed to me to take it. It is in the immediate vicinity of Paris; and after going through my researches, I should then be able to enjoy the retirement which I covet, and I therefore accepted of his proposition."

"I will then write to Asnieres. I can, besides, give you some information which may be useful to you, which I obtained from the Marchioness d'Harville. The ruin of Madam de Fermont was caused by the rascality of a notary, in whose hands her fortune was deposited. The notary denied the deposite."

"And what was the name of the wretch?"

"Mr. Jacques Ferrand," said the Duchess, unable to restrain her laughter.

"What a singular being you are, Clothilde! There is nothing but what is most serious and distressing in the subject of our conversation, and yet you are merry!" said the Count, surprised and displeased.

In fact, the Duchess, at the recollection of the amorous pretensions of the notary, could not restrain her hilarity.

"Pardon me, my dear friend," she said; "but the notary is a

very eccentric man, and they say of him very ridiculous things. But seriously, if his reputation for honesty has no better foundation than his reputation for sanctity, he is a great villain."

"Where does he live?"

"Rue de Sentier."

"He will receive a call from me. What you say of him coincides with certain suspicions of my own."

"What suspicions?"

"From certain inquiries which have been instituted, concerning the death of the brother of my friend, I am inclined to believe that, instead of committing suicide, he was the victim of assassination."

"What can induce you to believe such a horrible catastrophe?"

"Several reasons, which would require much time to explain, and I must leave you now. Do not forget the offers of service which you have tendered me in your name and the Duke's."

"Will you go without seeing Florestan?"

"The interview, as you may well imagine, would be very painful to me. I encountered it only with the hope of discovering some information respecting Madam de Fermont, unwilling to neglect any means which might lead to her discovery. Farewell."

"You have no mercy."

"Do you not know?"

"I know that your son never needed your advice more than at present."

"How? is he not rich and happy?"

"Yes; but he is not acquainted with men. He is blindly prodigal, because he is confiding and generous in the extreme. He does everything in a magnificent style, and I fear that the kindness of his nature is abused. If you knew how noble his heart is! I have never dared to lecture him upon his extravagance and irregularity. In the first place, because I am as much of a spendthrift as he is, and there are other reasons besides; but you, on the contrary, might——" The Duchess was unable to finish the sentence, for the voice of Florestan de Saint Remy was suddenly heard. He entered hastily the cabinet next to the parlor, and after having passionately closed the door, said in an altered voice to some one who accompanied him:

"But it is impossible!"

"I repeat to you," replied the clear and piercing tones of Mr. Badinot: "I repeat to you, that without it, before four o'clock you will be arrested; for if he does not receive the money soon, the man will lodge his complaint in the hands of the king's attorney, and you know the consequences of a forgery like that: the galleys, my poor Viscount!"

It is impossible to describe the look which the Duchess and Florestan's father exchanged, upon hearing these terrible words.

CHAPTER IX..... CONVERSATION.

Upon hearing the words which Mr. Badinot addressed to his son, 'it is a case of the galleys for you,' the Count turned ghastly pale. He leaned upon the back of a *fauteuil*. His legs sunk beneath him.

His venerable and respected name, dishonored by a man whom he suspected of being branded with illegitimacy!

When he had recovered from the first shock of amazement, the enraged expression of the aged man, and the threatening character of his gestures, as he advanced toward the cabinet, indicated such a frightful resolution, that the Duchess seized him by the hand, and said to him in a low tone, and with an accent of most profound conviction, "he is innocent; I assure you that he is innocent. Hear him in silence."

The Count stopped; he was anxious to believe what the Duchess had informed him. She was perfectly assured of the probity of Florestan. In order to obtain further sacrifices from her blind generosity, which alone could rescue him from arrest and the persecutions of Jacques Ferrand, the Viscount had affirmed to the Duchess, that being the dupe of a villain who had imposed upon him a forged draft, he was exposed to the risk of being regarded as an accomplice of the forger, having himself put the draft in circulation. The Duchess was well aware that the Viscount was imprudent, and prodigal, and entirely deficient in any notions of economy; but she not only believed him entirely incapable of any base and infamous transaction, but even of the slightest breach of good faith. Having twice advanced to him very heavy sums to relieve him from his embarrassments, she was desirous only of rendering him a friendly service, but the Viscount would never accept the money, only upon the condition of returning it, for people, he said, owed him more than twice the amount. This apparent scrupulousness imposed upon the Duchess, who besides yielded to the impulse of her feelings, and was only anxious to oblige Florestan without wasting a thought upon the probability of her loans being returned. He had affirmed that they would be, and she did not doubt it. She was convinced, that upon no other terms he would have accepted the heavy advances which she had made; and she was ready to answer for the honor of Florestan. When she begged his father to listen to the conversation which was about to take place, the Duchess supposed that it related to the breach of confidence, of which the Viscount had assured her he was the victim; and she supposed that he would be able completely to vindicate himself in the estimation of his father.

"Once more," replied Florestan, in an unnatural tone of voice, "I assure you that Petit Jean is an infamous scoundrel. He informed me that he had no other drafts but that which I took up three days ago. I thought this one was in circulation. It was payable three months after date, to Adams & Co., London."

"Yes, yes," said the clear and sharp voice of Mr. Badinot. "I knew, my dear Viscount, that you had arranged your plan with great skill; the forgery was only to be discovered when you were far away; but you sought to entrap people who are gifted with more cunning than yourself."

"It is a fine time, to tell me that, you miserable wretch!" exclaimed Florestan, in a furious tone. "Was it not you who brought me in contact with the man, who negotiated these drafts?"

"Come, come, my dear aristocrat," replied Badinot, in a collected tone; "be calm. You can forge commercial signatures, very skilfully; but that is no reason why you should treat your friends with disagreeable familiarity. If you fly into a passion, I shall leave you to your own resources, and you may get out of the scrape in the best manner that you can."

"And do you think that I can preserve composure in such a situation, if what you tell me is true? If this complaint is to be lodged to-day, in the hands of the King's attorney, I am lost, undone."

"It is precisely as I say, unless you again resort to your blue-eyed divinity."

"That is impossible."

"Then be resigned! It is a pity, for it is the last draft, and only for a paltry twenty-five thousand francs. To be compelled to breathe the southern breezes of Toulon, is disgraceful, awkward, absurd, silly. How could such an adept as yourself be caught in such a manner?"

"Good God! what shall I do? Nothing in this house belongs to me. I do not possess twenty louis in the world."

"You have friends."

"But I have borrowed of them already, as much as I can. You do not suppose that I am such a fool as to have waited until this late day, without resorting to them."

"That is true; excuse me. But let us talk calmly; that is the only way to arrive at some wise conclusion. I wished to explain to you, a moment since, that you have been dealing with men more cunning than yourself; but you would not listen to me."

"Speak, I beg of you, if it can be of any service."

"Let us recapitulate. You told me two months ago: 'I have one hundred and thirteen thousand francs in drafts, on different banking houses, at a long sight: find the means, my dear Badinot, of negotiating them for me.'"

"Well, proceed."

"Wait a moment. I asked you to let me see them. I had a kind of vague suspicion that the papers were forged, although it was admirably executed. I did not suspect that you possessed the imitative talent to such an extent. But as I have been intrusted with your fortune, since you have had none, I was thoroughly convinced that you were entirely ruined. I drew up the contract, by means of which, your horses, and carriages, were conveyed to Edwards; and also that which transferred your furniture to Boyer. It was, therefore, with some surprise, that I found you in possession of negotiable paper to such an amount. Do you not think so?"

"I will excuse your surprise, if you will come to the point."

"Here it is. I possess too much timidity of nature, to mingle directly in affairs of this character. I therefore had resort to a third person, who, no less clear-sighted than myself, suspected the trick which you intended to play."

"It is impossible! he would not have discounted the drafts if he believed them forged."

"How much cash did he advance on those drafts which were worth on the face, one hundred and thirteen thousand francs?"

"Twenty-five thousand francs in cash, and the balance in bills due."

"And how much have you realized from the bills?"

"Not a sous. You know that they were fictitious."

"How verdant you are, my dear Viscount. Having a hundred louis to receive in commissions if the negotiation succeeded, I had no motive for disclosing to him the exact state of your affairs; and as he supposed that you were still rich enough, and knew that you were adored by an exceedingly wealthy lady, who would never leave you in trouble, he was, therefore, perfectly confident of recovering his funds again: and he was willing to take all the risk of the transaction, for the chance which he had of gaining by it. And the result has proved that he was sagacious in his calculations; for you paid him the other day one hundred thousand francs, to redeem the forged draft for fifty-eight thousand francs; and yesterday, you paid thirty thousand francs for the second. In this last case, he was satisfied to receive the amount due on the face of the draft. How did you procure those thirty thousand francs yesterday? The devil take me if I know; you are a truly wonderful man. To conclude, if Mr. Petit Jean compels you to pay this last draft for twenty-five thousand francs, he will have received one hundred and fifty-five thousand francs, for the twenty-five thousand which he paid to you. Therefore, I was correct in my assertion, that you have been dealing with a man more astute than yourself, my dear Viscount."

"But why did he tell me that the last draft, which he presents to-day, had been negotiated?"

"So as not to alarm you. He told you before, that with the exception of the draft for fifty-eight thousand francs, the others were in circulation. When the first was fairly paid, the second came in; and now the third."

"The wretch!"

"Hear me; 'every man for himself,' says a celebrated lawyer, whose maxims I admire. This proves to you that Petit Jean, (and between us I should not be surprised if Jacques Ferrand, with all his renowned sanctity, goes half-and-half with him in these transactions;) this proves to you, as I said, that Petit Jean, encouraged by your first payment, speculated on this last draft, as he speculated upon the others, convinced that your friends would never suffer you to be brought before a criminal court. It belongs to you to see if their friendship is exhausted, dried up to dust, or whether some drops of gold might not yet be squeezed out of them; for if within three hours, my noble Viscount, you have not twenty-five thousand francs, you will be caged."

"If you were to repeat this for ever, it would be of no avail!"

"Perhaps you will consent to pluck, at least, one feather from the wing of the generous Duchess?"

"I repeat to you, it cannot be thought of. To raise twenty-five thousand francs within three hours, after all the other sums we have raised, would require superhuman skill."

"To please you, favored mortal, she would attempt an impossibility."

"She has already exhausted herself. She borrowed one hundred thousand francs from her husband. She cannot do it again. My dear Badinot, you never had any reason to complain of me. I have always been generous; try to obtain from this rascally Petit Jean some delay. You know I am always able to reward those who serve me. If this affair is hushed up, I shall soar again."

"Petit Jean is as inflexible as you are unreasonable."

"I?"

"Try once more to interest your generous friend in your melancholy fate. Confess to her the truth. You have already said that you were the dupe; inform her now that you are the forger himself."

"No; never will I make such a confession. It would increase my shame without any compensating advantage."

"Do you prefer that she shall learn it to-morrow by the Gazette des Tribunaux?"

"I have three hours in which I can take flight."

"And where will you go to without money? On the other hand, consider, that if this last draft is paid, you will find yourself in a superb position. You will only be pressed by your ordinary debts. Come, promise me to speak once more to the Duchess. You are so acute, and you can render yourself so interesting, in spite of your errors, that if she should learn the worst, she would perhaps esteem you none the less. At all events, she would lift you out of this quagmire. Come; promise to see your fair divinity, and I will run to Mr. Petit Jean. I think I can obtain one or two hours of delay."

"Well, I see I must drain the cup of shame to the dregs."

"Come, good luck to you; be tender, passionate, and charming. I will run to Petit Jean, you will find me there until three o'clock; for after that it will be too late: the office of the king's attorney closes at four;" and Mr. Badinot went away.

When the door was closed, Florestan was heard to exclaim in profound despair, "Good God! good God!"

During this conversation, which unveiled to the Count the infamy of his son, and to the Duchess, the infamy of the man she had adored—they had both remained motionless, breathing with difficulty, under this terrible disclosure.

It would be impossible to convey any idea of the mute eloquence of the distressing scene which took place between the young female and the Count, when neither of them could any longer doubt the guilt of Florestan. Stretching his arm toward the room where his son was, the aged man cast an overpowering glance upon the Duchess, which seemed to tell her, "Here is the man for whom you have braved shame—shrunk from no sacrifice; this is the son whom you reproached me with forsaking!"

The Duchess understood the reproach, and her head sunk for a moment under this accumulated weight of shame. The lesson was a terrible one; but by degrees the distressing anxiety which had contracted the features of the Duchess, changed into an expression of haughty indignation. The unpardonable guilt of this woman, was, at least refined by the sincerity of her love, the self-sacrificing nature of her devotion, the profuseness of her generosity, the frankness of her character, and her unmitigated aversion to everything despicable and mean. She was still too young, too beautiful, and too much admired, to feel any humiliation at the discovery of the mercenary nature of the Viscount's attachment. When the illusions of love had vanished, the haughty and decided woman felt neither hatred nor anger; but a mortal disgust, and a cold contempt blighted at one blow, the affection which had, until this moment, been so strong. She evinced none of the emotions of a woman who had been basely deceived, but all the scorn and indignation of a high-bred lady, in discovering that a man she had honored with her society, was a forger and swindler. Supposing even, that some circumstances had mitigated the unrelieved ignominy of Florestan, the Duchess could have never restored him to her favor. According to her mode of thought, the man who could be tempted by vice or by folly, to pass the limits of honor, existed no longer in her eyes: honor, in her estimation, being essential to existence. The only painful feeling which mingled with the disgust of the Duchess, was her apprehensions for the effect which this frightful disclosure would produce upon her old friend, the Count.

For a moment he did not appear to see, hear, or be in any way conscious of the existence of his companion; his head was bent low, his arms hung lifeless, his pallor was ghastly, and a convulsive sigh occasionally shook his strong frame. With a man of such a resolute and energetic character, such despondency was more alarming than the most furious outbreaks of rage. The Duchess looked at him with anxiety.

"Courage, my friend," said she, in a low voice: "for your sake, for mine; for that man's, I know what remains for me to do."

The old man fastened upon her a glance, as if he had been dragged from his stupor by some violent emotion; he raised his head, his features assumed a menacing aspect, and forgetting that his son might hear him, he exclaimed:

"And I, also, for you, for me, and for that man, know what remains to be done."

"Who is there?" asked Florestan, with surprise.

The Duchess, shrinking from being a spectator of the interview which was about to take place, disappeared through the door that led to the private staircase.

Florestan having again demanded, "Who is there?" and receiving no reply, entered the parlor, and found himself alone with the Count. The long beard of the old man, had changed him so much, he was so meanly clad, that his son, who had not seen him for several years, did not recognize him at first, and even advanced rapidly toward him in a threatening manner.

"What are you doing here? who are you?" he exclaimed.

"I am the husband of that woman," responded the Count, pointing to the portrait of his wife.

"My father!" exclaimed the Count, moving back in affright, as he now recalled the features which had escaped from his memory.

Standing erect, with a glance of rage, and a brow flushed, from which the long white locks were thrown back, his arms crossed upon his breast, the menacing aspect of the excited father completely overpowered and crushed his son. The Count, with a violent effort, restrained his passion, and attempted to hide his indignation.

"My father," said Florestan, in a changed tone of voice, "you were here?"

"I was here."

"You have heard——"

"Everything."

The Viscount covered his face with his hands. A fearful pause ensued.

Florestan, at first amazed and afflicted at the apparition of his father, was now employed in meditating in what manner he could turn the unexpected interview to the best account.

"All is not lost," said he to himself. "The presence of my father is an augury of good fortune; he is acquainted with my guilt, and he will not allow his name to be dishonored. I must play a close game; skill, cunning and courage are necessary; I shall not be compelled to resort to the Duchess." He now gave to his charming features an expression of deep despondency; he moistened his eyes with the tears of repentance; he assumed the most quavering voice, the most pathetic accent, and exclaimed, clasping his hands with a gesture of despair:

"My father, I am most wretched! To meet you at such a moment, after so many years of separation, is most distressing. I must seem to you very culpable; but I beg of you to listen to me, I entreat you to permit me, not to justify myself, but to explain to you my conduct. Will you allow me to do it, my father?"

The Count did not utter a word; his features remained fixed and impassible. He was seated in a fauteuil, leaned upon his elbow, and, with his chin resting upon his hand, gazed upon his son in silence.

If Florestan had been aware of the terrible secret that augmented the rage, hatred and revenge, which the conviction of his son's infamy would have excited in the breast of any father, he probably would not have attempted to deceive him. But, ignorant of the suspicions which rested upon his own legitimacy, ignorant of the crime of his mother, Florestan did not doubt the success of the stratagem which he proposed to play. He was convinced that, if he could only arouse the Count from his misanthropy, he would encounter any sacrifice before he would see his name dishonored.

"My father," continued Florestan, tenderly, "will you permit me to attempt, not to exculpate myself, but to explain, by the force of what circumstances, I have been drawn into transactions, which I confess to be infamous." The Viscount seemed to regard the silence of his father as consent, for he continued: "When I had the misfortune to lose my mother—my poor mother, who loved me so tenderly—I was not twenty years of age. I found myself alone in the world without a counsellor, without a friend, the master of a considerable fortune; and, accustomed to luxury from my childhood, it was to me a habit and a necessity. Ignorant how difficult it is to earn money, I lavished mine with prodigality, which has been the cause of my ruin. However extravagant my expenses were, they were distinguished for their elegance, and by the finish and perfection of my taste, I eclipsed those who were ten times my superiors in fortune. I was intoxicated by my first success, and I became a man of display, in the manner that other men become warriors and statesmen. Yes, I became fond of pomp; not through gratified vanity at vulgar ostentation, but I loved it as the painter loves his art, as the poet loves poetry, and, like every other artist, I was jealous of my own creations—the exquisite finish of my display was my creation. I sacrificed everything to its perfection. I aspired to have it splendid, grand, complete and harmonious in every department, from my equipage to my table, from my dress to my furniture. I wished that my life might be the impersonation of taste and elegance, and I wished also to insure the applause of the crowd, and the admiration of the *élite*. This rare success I achieved."

While speaking, the face of Florestan lost its hypocritical expression, his eye lighted with a sort of enthusiasm, for he spoke the truth; he had been at first seduced by this rather novel idea of display. The Viscount studied carefully the features of his father, who seemed to him to be gradually relaxing his severity.

He continued, with increasing animation:

"An oracle and sovereign in the world of fashion, my censure or my praise was a supreme decree. I was quoted, imitated, admired, applauded by the first society in Paris, which is the first in Europe—the first in the world. Women shared the general infatuation: the loveliest and most admired, were ambitious of honoring with their presence the fêtes which I gave; and at all times and in every place, the incomparable elegance and the exquisite taste of these entertainments were eulogized—entertainments which no millionaire could either eclipse or equal. I was the monarch of fashion: that phrase, if you understand it, will explain to you all, my father."

"I understand it; and I presume, that in the bagnio you will invent some elegant fashion of wearing your chain, which will be called *à la Saint Remy*," said the old gentleman, with bitter irony; "and Saint Remy is my name!" He was again silent, leaning his chin upon his hand.

Florestan had to summon all his powers of self-command, to conceal the wound which this biting sarcasm inflicted. He continued, in a more humble tone:

"Alas! my father, it is not through pride that I recall these recollections of my success; for I repeat to you, that this success has been my ruin. Flattered, envied, praised, and caressed, not by interested sycophants, but by people whose rank and wealth were infinitely superior to my own, over whom I had no advantage except that which elegance gives—the same to fashion that taste is to the arts—my head became giddy at the elevation. I did not consider that my fortune would be squandered in a few years; I was even indifferent to such a result. I could not surrender the feverish dazzle of that life, in which pleasure followed pleasure, enjoyment after enjoyment, triumph upon the footsteps of triumph. If you knew, my father, what it is to be everywhere pointed out as the hero of the day, to hear the hum which greets your entrance into the drawing-room, to hear the beautiful whisper to each other, 'He comes,' 'It is he;' if you knew——"

"I know what you mean," said the old man, without changing his position. "There was a crowd the other day in the public square. A hum was heard all at once, very much like that which greets your entrance into a drawing-room; the eyes of the women particularly were fixed upon a handsome fellow, and they pointed him to each other, saying, 'It is he,' 'He comes,' exactly as if it had been yourself."

"But that man, my father?"

"Was a forger, whom they were about nailing to the pillory."

"Ah!" commenced Florestan, with concentrated rage; but which glided rapidly into a tone of deep affliction, as he continued: "My father, you have no mercy. I do not seek to deny my faults, but only to explain to you the manner in which I have been drawn into them. But I will finish my confession, even if you overwhelm me with your sarcasm. I will try to make you understand the feverish vanity which has been the cause of my ruin, and then you will pity me; for people always pity an idiot, and I was one. Closing my eyes, I surrendered myself to the dazzling vortex, into which I bore with me the most charming women and the most fascinating men. How could I stop? As well might you tell the poet, who exhausts all his energy, and whose genius preys upon his heart, to pause in the midst of the inspiration which transports him. No! I could not pause in my career; I could not abdicate the throne upon which I was placed; I could not retire to the vulgar herd, ridiculed and despised; I could not afford this triumph to those malignant enemies, whom I had thus far conquered and crushed; I could not voluntarily capitulate. The fatal day finally arrived when, for the first time, money failed me. I was as much astonished as if it had been impossible for that moment ever to arrive. Yet I was still master of my horses, carriages, and furniture: I might have still possessed sixty thousand francs; but what could I do with such a trifle? 'Twas here I took the first step in an infamous path. I was yet honest; I had only spent what belonged to me; but I now began contracting debts which I could not pay. I transferred all that I possessed to two of my servants, in order to pay them their wages, and enjoy for six months longer, in spite of my creditors, the splendor which had intoxicated me. To meet my gambling necessities, and various extravagant expenses, I borrowed first from Jews; and to pay them, I borrowed from my friends, both male and female. When these resources were exhausted, there came a new crisis in my life. From an honest man, I had sunk into a chevalier d'industrie; but I was not yet criminal. I hesitated upon this last brink. I wished to adopt a sure remedy. I had proved in several duels that I was no coward; and I wished to slay myself.'

"Indeed, you did!" said the Count, with wild irony.

"You do not believe it, my father?"

"It was either too soon or too late," said the impassioned old man, in the same attitude.

Florestan, thinking he had moved his father by alluding to his intent to commit self-murder, concluded he would finish the scene by a specimen of theatrical effect. He opened a drawer and took from it a small phial of blue crystal, and said to the Count placing it on the mantelpiece:

"An Italian quack sold me that poison."

"And was it for yourself?" said the old man, in his unchanged position.

Florestan understood his father's inuendo, and his face flashed with a real indignation, for he had spoken the truth.

The passing fancy had crossed his brain to kill himself. But people of his class are too cowardly to meet alone the grim vis-

itant whom they frequently confront for some point of honor in a famous duel.

He exclaimed, therefore, with the accent of truth: "I have fallen very low, but not so low as that, my father; the poison was intended for myself."

"And you were afraid!" said the Count.

"I confess that I shrunk from adopting this final remedy; I was not yet entirely desperate; the people to whom I was indebted, were rich, and could afford to wait for their money. At my age, and with my acquaintances, I hoped at least, to repair my fortune, if I did not succeed in securing an honorable and independent position. Many of my friends, with less ability than myself, had made rapid advances in diplomacy. I have an ambitious weakness; I only expressed the wish, and I was attached to the Gerolstein embassy. Within a few days afterward, a gambling debt which I had contracted to a man whom I hated, placed me in a cruel embarrassment; I had exhausted all my resources, and a fatal temptation assailed my mind. Believing myself certain of impunity, I committed an infamous action. You now see, my father, that I have concealed nothing from you; I have confessed the iniquity of my conduct; I have not sought to extenuate one fault: two alternatives present themselves and I am prepared for either. The first is, to kill myself and leave your name dishonored; for if I do not pay to-day twenty-five thousand francs, the complaint will be made, the report will spread, and dead or alive, my name will be branded with crime. The second is to throw myself into the arms of my father, and entreat him to save his son from the galleys and his name from infamy, and I will promise to start to-morrow for Africa, to enlist as a soldier, to perish on the field of battle, or return with my name restored to the rolls of honor. I assure you, that such is my real determination; in the presence of the extremity which overwhelms me, I have no other resort. As you decide, I either shall die covered with shame, or live to atone for my faults. These are not the empty vaunts of a young man, my father; I am twenty-five years of age, I have courage enough either to kill myself or become a soldier; I will never go to the bagnio."

The Count arose from his seat. "I do not wish that my name should be dishonored," said he to Florestan, sternly.

"My father! my saviour!" exclaimed the Viscount, about to throw himself in his father's arms, who with a repulsive gesture calmed his transports.

"They wait for you until three o'clock, in the house of the man who holds the forged draft?"

"Yes, father, and it is now two o'clock."

"Let us pass into your study, and provide me with writing materials."

"Here, father."

The Count seated himself before the desk of Florestan, and wrote in a firm hand:

"I promise to pay, at ten o'clock on this evening, twenty-five thousand francs which my son owes.

"COUNT DE SAINT REMY."

"Your creditor only wants money. In spite of his threats he will grant for this a new delay. He may go to Mr. Dupont the banker, No. 7, rue Richelieu, who will be answerable for the value of this promise."

"Oh, father! how can I ever repay your kindness!"

"You will wait for me at ten o'clock to night, and let your creditor be here."

"Yes, father; and day after to-morrow I will start for Africa. You will see if I am ungrateful; and when I am restored to honor, you will accept, perhaps, my thanks."

"You owe me nothing; I have said that my name should not be dishonored, and it is no idle promise," said the Count, taking the cane which he had left upon the table, and advancing toward the door.

"Your hand, at least, my father," said Florestan, in a suppliant tone.

"Here, to night, at ten o'clock," said the Count, refusing his hand, as he departed.

"Saved!" exclaimed Florestan, in a triumphant tone. "Saved, almost!" he repeated, after a moment's reflection. "So long as I am not ruined, it is so much gained. Perhaps to night I will confess the other thing, since he seems in such excellent humor. He will not stop half-way; he will not suffer that his first sacrifice shall prove unavailing, in order to spare a second. And yet, why should I tell him? Who will ever know it? Never mind, if nothing is discovered, I will appropriate to my own use the money which he gives me to pay this last debt. I had great trouble to move the headstrong man. The bitterness of his sarcasms made me doubt his good intentions. But my threat of suicide, and the fear of having his name dishonored, determined him. I aimed at the right spot, and hit it. He is probably much less poor than he affects to be. If he possesses a hundred thousand francs, he must have laid up quite a sum by his economical mode of life. I repeat, that his arrival was a perfect God-send. He has a savage look, but I believe, on the whole, that he is a good man. But I must hurry to the officers."

The Viscount rang the bell, and Mr. Boyer appeared.

"Why did you not inform me that my father was here! 'twas a great oversight."

"Twice I attempted to speak to you, when you came through the door of the garden, with Mr. Badinot, but as you were absorbed in conversation with him, you gave me a signal not to interrupt you. I could not take the liberty to insist; I should regret that you could believe me guilty of negligence."

"Very well. Tell Edwards to have ready Orion, instantly. No: Plower with the gig."

Boyer bowed respectfully. As he was about retiring, some one knocked. Boyer looked at the Viscount in an interrogating manner.

"Come in," said Florestan.

A second valet appeared, bearing in his hand a small silver salver.

Mr. Boyer took the salver with emulous civility, and presented it politely to the Viscount.

The latter took from it a somewhat large package sealed with black sealing wax. The two servants disappeared.

Florestan opened the envelope, and found that it contained twenty-five thousand francs in treasury notes, but not a word of writing.

"Decidedly," he exclaimed; "this is a lucky day. I am saved now beyond a peradventure. I will hasten to the jeweller's," said he to himself. "No, I will wait; they can have no suspicion of me; and twenty-five thousand francs are serviceable in hand. I was foolish ever to doubt that my star was in the ascendant. At the moment when it appeared the darkest, does it not appear in its most glorious splendor? But from whence came this money? Let me examine the seal. I cannot be deceived; there is an N. and an L.; it must be Clothilde. But how did she know of my embarrassment? Not one word accompanies the money, which is very strange. What a fortunate intervention, however! I appointed a meeting with her this morning, but the threats of Mr. Badinot, drove even Clothilde out of my head. After waiting for me down stairs, she probably went away. The package is a delicate means of letting me know that she fears I have forgotten her on account of some financial difficulty. Yes, it is an indirect reproach, for not applying to her. Good Clothilde! always the same; generous as a queen. What a calamity it was to be compelled to resort to her. I sometimes regret it; but I only adopted it in the last extremity."

"The gig of the Viscount is ready," said Mr. Boyer.

"Who brought this letter?" asked Florestan.

"I do not know, sir. I will inquire down stairs."

"But tell me if there is no one on the first floor," said the Viscount, looking at the valet in a significant manner.

"There is no one at present, sir."

"I was mistaken," thought Florestan. "Clothilde waited for me, but is now gone."

"Would the Viscount grant me two minutes?"

"Speak, but be quick."

"Edwards and myself have learned that the Duke de Montbrison wishes to set up an establishment; and if the Viscount would propose to him his own, which is so superbly furnished; as well as his stables, which are so completely stocked, it would be an excellent opportunity for us to dispose of the whole; and as we have supposed, would prove agreeable to the Viscount."

"Certainly: you are right, Boyer. I will see Montbrison, and speak to him. What are your conditions?"

"The Viscount understands very well, that we must try to improve by his generosity."

"And make money by your bargain; that is perfectly clear. But what is your price?"

"For the whole, two hundred and sixty thousand francs, Viscount."

"How much profit will you and Edwards realize?"

"About forty thousand, my lord."

"That is doing very well, I confess; but so much the better for you. I have been pleased with your services, and if I had a will to make, I would have left that sum to you and Edwards."

And the Viscount departed, with the intention of seeing his creditor, and afterward visiting the Duchess de Lucenay, whom he did not suspect of having overheard the conversation between himself and Mr. Badinot.

CHAPTER X. ..... THE INTERVIEW.

THE hotel de Lucenay was one of those royal habitations of the faubourg Saint Germain, which was rendered so magnificent by its unobstructed view. A modern house could have easily been placed in the space which was occupied by the staircase of one of those palaces; the ground it covered was equal to an entire square.

About nine o'clock in the evening of the same day, the two folds of the enormous door of this hotel were opened, to admit the entrance of a splendid chariot, which, after describing a perfect circle in the immense court-yard, stopped before a large sheltered porch, which led to the first ante-chamber.

The stamping of the two mettlesome and vigorous horses, was yet resounding upon the echoing pavement, when a gigantic footman opened the emblazoned porch. A young man slowly descended from this elegant vehicle, and not less slowly ascended the five or six steps of the entrance.

This young man was the Viscount de Saint Remy.

On leaving his creditor, (who, satisfied with the promise of Florestan's father, had granted the delay asked, and agreed to call for his money at ten o'clock in the evening, at the rue de Chaillot,) de Saint Remy proceeded to Madam de Lucenay's to thank her for the new service she had rendered him. Not having met the Duchess in the morning, he felt in glorious spirits at the certainty of finding her in perfect readiness to receive him, at an hour which she had habitually reserved for himself.

The eagerness with which the two footmen of the ante-chamber ran to open the glazed door, the moment they recognized the carriage of Florestan; the marked respect exhibited by the other liveried servants, as they spontaneously rose when the Viscount passed, and other almost imperceptible evidences, would have induced the belief, that if not the real master of the establishment, he was at least the second in importance.

Whenever the Duke de Lucenay entered with his umbrella in his hand, and his feet clad in heavy overshoes, (for he detested riding in the day time,) the same domestic evolutions were performed, and with equal respect, though a close observer would have noticed a different expression of countenance portrayed, on the reception of the husband, and that of the lover.

The same eagerness was manifested by the servants in the drawing-room, when Florestan entered it; one of them immediately proceeded to announce his arrival to Madam de Lucenay.

Never had the Viscount experienced more self-satisfaction, or felt more sure of his power. His step was that of a conqueror.

The *victory* he had gained over his father that morning; the new proof of the attachment of Madam de Lucenay; the joy of having been so miraculously extricated from his terrible position; a renewed confidence in his lucky star; all gave to his beautiful features an expression of assurance and good-humor, that rendered them doubly seducing. Never, in fact, had he felt better or more pleased with himself. And he had cause.

Never had his slender and graceful form been more genteelly or elegantly dressed; never had his pride been more delightfully flattered by the thought: "the mistress of this palace is mine, is at my feet. This morning, in fact, did she not await an interview with me at my own domicile?"

Florestan delivered himself to these vain reflections, while passing through three or four saloons that conducted to an apartment, which the Duchess usually occupied. A last glance at the mirror tended to confirm the excellent opinion that he possessed of himself.

The servant threw open the two folds of the drawing-room door, and announced:

"The Viscount de Saint Remy."

The astonishment and indignation of the Duchess were indescribable. She could not but believe that the Count had concealed from his son the fact that she had also heard all——

We remarked, that on learning the infamous character of Florestan, the love of Madam de Lucenay was extinguished, and had changed into utter contempt. We have also stated, that in the midst of her errors and her inconstancy, Madam de Lucenay had preserved pure and uncontaminated, sentiments of justice and of honor, and an enthusiastic regard for honesty and uprightness of character. With her faults were blended noble qualities, and with her vices, virtues; treating love as cavalierly as men would treat it, she carried as far, nay farther, than they, devotion, generosity, courage, and above all, a horror of all meanness.

The Duchess, attired for her evening's engagement, was, although *without diamonds*, dressed with her usual elegance and good taste. Her splendid toilet; the deep rouge that colored her cheeks, even to her eyelids, and which she wore with all the confidence and assurance that characterizes a lady of the court; her beauty, surpassingly attractive beneath the brilliant light; her movement so graceful as to resemble that of a goddess walking upon the clouds; rendered more striking still a majesty of manner that none possessed like her, and which she exhibited, when necessary, to an extent almost amounting to insolence.

With a knowledge of the haughty and determined character of the Duchess, imagine the expression of her features when the Viscount, with a confident and smiling look, approached her, and said, with affectionate tenderness:

"My dear Clothilde, how good you are; how much you——"

The Viscount could not finish.

The Duchess was seated, and had not altered her position; but her gesture, her glance, revealed a feeling of contempt, at once so calm and crushing, that Florestan stopped short. He could neither speak a word nor advance another step.

Never had Madam de Lucenay exhibited herself to him under such an aspect. He could not believe that it was the same woman, whom he had always found mild, tender, and passionately submissive; for no being is more humble, or more timid, than a resolute woman before the man she loves, and who rules over her.

His first surprise passing over, Florestan became ashamed of his weakness, and recovered his habitual audacity. Advancing one step toward Madam de Lucenay, for the purpose of taking her hand, he uttered, in a most caressing tone:

"My God! Clothilde, what is the meaning of this? I have never seen you look so beautiful, and yet——"

"Ah! such impudence is intolerable," cried the Duchess, recoiling from him, with so much disgust and haughtiness, that Florestan was struck with renewed surprise.

Regaining, however, additional confidence, he said to her:

"You will at least inform me, Clothilde, the cause of this sudden change? What have I done? What do you wish?"

Without answering him, Madam de Lucenay surveyed him from head to foot, with a look so insulting, that Florestan felt the flush of anger mount to his forehead, and said:

"I am aware, madam, that you are accustomed to quarrel with your friends, quite suddenly; do you wish to quarrel with me?"

"Such pretence is curious, indeed!" said Madam de Lucenay, with a sardonic laugh. "Know, sir, that when a lackey robs me, I do not quarrel with him: I discharge him."

"Madam!"

"Enough!" said the Duchess, in a short and insolent voice. "Your presence is disagreeable to me. What do you wish here? Have you not received your money?"

"It was true, then? I imagined it was you. These twenty-five thousand francs——"

"Your last *forgery* has been withdrawn; has it not? The honor of your family is saved. It is well. Begone!"

"Then you believe——"

"I much regret such a disposition of this money. So many honest persons might have been benefited by it! But it was necessary to think of your father's shame, and of mine."

"So; you know all? Nothing remains for me now, you perceive—but to die—" cried Florestan, in a most pathetic and despairing tone.

An impertinent burst of laughter from the Duchess, welcomed this tragic exclamation. In the midst of her excess of hilarity, she added:

"Oh, Heavens! I never could have believed that infamy could be rendered so ridiculous!"

"Madam!" cried Florestan, his features contracted by rage.

At the same instant, the folding doors were hurriedly thrown open, and the Duke de Montbrison was announced. Notwithstanding his usual self-control, Florestan could with difficulty restrain the violence of his resentment. It would have certainly been remarked by a man more experienced in society than the Duke.

The Duke de Montbrison was scarcely eighteen years of age. Imagine a young girl, with a lovely face, of surpassing fairness, in which the white and the rose are most delicately blended; lips of deepest vermillion; a chin whose satined smoothness is slightly shaded by a down, so light that it could scarcely be termed a beard; large hazel eyes, in which were expressed both the timidity of inexperience, and the vivacity of youth; a form as slender even as that of the Duchess: and some idea may be formed of the appearance of the young Duke, who was the very ideality of the Cherubino, the delicate whiteness of whose neck attracted the admiration of the Countess and her maid, when they were about to decorate him with a woman's cap.*

The Viscount had the weakness, or the boldness—we know not which to call it—to remain.

"How amiable you are, Conrad, to have thought of me this

* Marriage of Figaro.

evening," said Madam de Lucenay, in a most affectionate tone, and extending her hand to the young Duke.

The latter advanced to shake hands with his cousin, but Clothilde elevated her hand gracefully, and said gayly to the Duke:

"Kiss it, cousin, you have your gloves on."

"Pardon me, cousin," said the youth, and he applied his lips to the ungloved and delicate hand that was presented to him.

"What do you intend doing this evening, Conrad?" asked Madam de Lucenay, without appearing in the least manner to notice Florestan's presence.

"Nothing, cousin. On leaving you I shall visit the club."

"By no means. You will accompany us—the Duke and myself—to Madam de Senneval's. This is her evening. She has already asked me several times to present you to her."

"Cousin, I shall be very happy to place myself at your command."

"I must say, frankly, I do not like to see you so soon accustom yourself to visit these clubs; you possess everything that is necessary to make you welcomed by society, and you will be considered even *recherché* in it. You must, therefore, visit much."

"Yes, cousin."

"And as my relation toward you is somewhat in the light of a grandmother, my dear Conrad, I am disposed to be very exacting. You have attained your majority it is true; but I fear that it will be for some time that you will require a tutor, and you must resolve to regard me as such."

"With joy and happiness, my cousin," said the young Duke, with animation.

It is impossible to paint the silent rage of Florestan, who was still standing and leaning against the mantelpiece. Neither the Duke nor Clothilde paid him the least attention. Aware of the decisive character of Madam de Lucenay, he imagined that she was carrying her audacity and contempt for him while present, even to acts of coquetry with the Duke de Montbrison. It was not so; the Duchess absolutely felt for her cousin a species of maternal affection; she had known him from his birth. But the young Duke was so handsome; he appeared so happy at the gracious reception of his cousin, that the jealousy, or rather the pride, of Florestan, was exasperated; his heart writhed under the cruel gnawings of envy, caused by Conrad de Montbrison, who, rich and admired, entered so joyously and so splendidly, this life of pleasures, of intoxication, and of excitement, which he was leaving, ruined, disgraced, despised and dishonored. De Saint Remy possessed courage, but it was the courage of the head—if that may so be called, which seeks a duel either from anger or vanity—but base and corrupt, he had not that courage of the heart, which triumphs over bad propensities, or which at least affords the energy necessary to escape ignominy by suicide. Exasperated by the withering contempt of the Duchess, and believing that he saw a successor in the young Duke, de Saint Remy resolved to oppose the insolence of the former, and to seek, if necessary, a quarrel with Conrad.

The Duchess, irritated at his audacity, did not deign to notice him; and de Montbrison, in his ardor, forgetting the proprieties of society, had neither bowed, nor spoken a word to the Viscount, although he was acquainted with him.

The latter, advancing toward Conrad, whose back was turned, touched him lightly on the arm, and said, in a dry and ironical tone:

"Good evening, sir; a thousand pardons for not having observed you before."

De Montbrison, feeling that he had been wanting in politeness, turned quickly, and said cordially to the Viscount:

"I confess, sir, that I am somewhat confused; but I hope that my cousin, who is the cause of my abstraction, will make my apologies, and——"

"Conrad," said the Duchess, urged to extremes by the impudence of Florestan, who persisted in remaining, and braving her, "Conrad, it is all right; no apologies: it is not worth while."

Conrad, believing that his cousin was jestingly reproaching him, for his want of courtesy, said gayly to the Viscount, who was pale with anger:

"I will not insist upon it, sir, since my cousin prohibits me. You see her tuition has already commenced."

"And this tuition will not stop there, you may rest assured; therefore, under such an expectation—which the Duchess is eager to realize, without doubt—under such an expectation, I say, an idea occurs to me: that of making you a proposition."

"To me, sir?" said Conrad, beginning to be displeased at Florestan's sardonic tone.

"To you, yourself. In a few hours, I shall leave, sir, for the Gerolstein embassy, to which I am attached. I wish to dispose of my house, furnished throughout, and of my stable, which is well provided: it is proper *that you should so arrange yourself.*" And the Viscount emphasized most insolently the last words, while looking at the Duchess. "It would be quite the thing, would it not, madam?"

"I do not understand you, sir," said de Montbrison, with increased astonishment.

"I will tell you, Conrad, why you cannot accept the offer made you," said Clothilde.

"And why can he not accept my offer, madam?"

"My dear Conrad, that which is offered to you for sale, is already sold to others—you comprehend? you would suffer the inconvenience of a highway robbery."

Florestan bit his lips with rage.

"Beware, madam!" he cried.

"What! menaces! here, sir?" cried Conrad.

"Never mind, Conrad; do not regard him," said Madam de Lucenay, helping herself to a lozenge from a small confectionery-box, with most imperturbable sang froid; "an honorable man neither should nor would compromise himself with the gentleman. If he insists upon it, I will tell you why."

A terrible altercation was about to take place, when the door was thrown open suddenly, and the Duke de Lucenay entered with all his usual bluster and precipitancy.

"What, my dear, are you ready so soon?" he said to his wife. "It is wonderful, it is astonishing! Good evening, Saint Remy: good evening, Conrad. Ah! I am one of the most desperate of men; or, in other words, I neither sleep nor eat; I am perfectly stupefied; I shall never become reconciled to it. Poor d'Harville! what an event!"

And de Lucenay tumbled himself backward upon a sofa, threw his hat at a distance with a gesture of despair, crossed his left leg upon his right knee, and seized his foot in his hand, by the way of keeping himself in countenance, uttering all the while the most disconsolate exclamations. The emotion of Conrad and Florestan somewhat subsided before the Duke de Lucenay, generally the most observing of men, discovered it.

Madam de Lucenay, not from embarrassment—for she was not a woman to be embarrassed—but on account of Florestan, whose presence was both repugnant and insupportable to her, said to the Duke:

"When you are ready, we will go, and introduce Conrad to Madam de Senneval."

"No, no, no!" cried the Duke, letting go his foot for the purpose of seizing one of the cushions, which he struck violently with both fists, to the great terror of Clothilde, who, at the unexpected cries of her husband, sprang toward her sofa.

"My God, sir! what is the matter with you?" said she to him. "You frighten me terribly."

"No!" uttered the Duke; and pushing away the cushion, he started up suddenly, and commenced gesticulating and walking at the same time. I could not have fancied such an occurrence as the death of this poor d'Harville. And you, Saint Remy?"

"The occurrence is frightful indeed," said the Viscount, seeking, with rage and hatred in his heart, to catch the eye of de Montbrison; but the latter, after the words of his cousin, not from want of courage, but from pride, refused to notice a man so deeply disgraced.

"Pray, sir," said the Duchess to her husband, on rising, "do not evince your regret for Mr. d'Harville in such a boisterous and singular manner. Ring, if you please, for the servant."

"That is very true," said de Lucenay, seizing the bell-cord. "Only three days ago, and he was alive and well, and to-day, what remains of him! Nothing! nothing! nothing!"

These last three exclamations were accompanied by three jirks, so violent, that the cord which the Duke held in his hand, while constantly gesticulating, separated from the upper pully, fell upon a candelabra furnished with wax-candles, and overturned two of them. One landed upon the mantelpiece, and broke a beautiful little Sevres vase; the other fell upon an ermine rug, which caught fire, but in a moment was extinguished under the feet of Conrad. At the same instant, two footmen, summoned by the violent ringing, entered in haste, and found de Lucenay with the bell-cord in his hand, his wife bursting with laughter at the ridiculous catastrophe, and de Montbrison participating in the hilarity of his cousin.

De Saint Remy alone did not laugh.

De Lucenay, much accustomed to accidents of the kind, retained a serious countenance. He threw the cord to one of the men, and said to him:

"The Duchess's carriage."

Clothilde, somewhat calmed, remarked:

"Really, sir, no one in the world but yourself, could have turned such a melancholy event into so laughable an affair."

"Melancholy! call it frightful, call it frightful. Only think;

since yesterday I have been endeavoring to ascertain how many persons there are in my own family that I would have been willing to have spared in the place of poor d'Harville. My nephew d'Embreval for instance, who is so tiresome with his stuttering; then again, there's your aunt Merinville, who is always talking about her nerves and her megrims, and who swallows daily while waiting for her dinner, an abominable bowl of broth, like a porter's wife. What's your opinion of your aunt Merinville?"

"Fie! sir, you are crazy!" said the Duchess, shrugging her shoulders.

"But, it is true," continued the Duke; "for one real friend, we would give twenty for whom we are indifferent. Is it not so, Saint Remy?"

"Undoubtedly."

"It is always the old story of the tailor. Do you know the story of the tailor, Conrad?"

"No, cousin."

"You will understand the allegory, at once. A tailor is condemned to be hung; there was but one tailor in the town; what were the inhabitants to do! They said to the judge, 'we have but one tailor, and three shoemakers; if it is all the same to you to hang one of the shoemakers in the place of the tailor, we shall be able to get along well enough with two shoemakers.' Do you understand the allegory, Conrad?"

"Yes, cousin."

"And you, Saint Remy?"

"I also."

"The Duchess's carriage," said one of the footmen.

"Ah! very well, but why have you not put on your diamonds?" said de Lucenay, of a sudden; "they will become such a toilette as yours, very prettily."

Saint Remy started.

"Considering how rare it is that we go into society together," continued the Duke, "you might at least do me the honor of wearing your diamonds. The Duchess's diamonds are beautiful; have you ever seen them, Saint Remy?"

"Yes, the gentleman is perfectly familiar with them," said Clothilde. "Your arm, Conrad."

De Lucenay followed the Duchess with Saint Remy, who could not restrain his anger.

"Do you not go with us to the Sennevals, Saint Remy?" said the Duke to him.

"No, it's impossible," he answered abruptly.

"Hold! Saint Remy, Madam de Senneval is one of those persons—did I say one? two I mean, that I would willingly sacrifice; for her husband is also on my list."

"What list?"

"The list of those that I would as lief see die, could d'Harville have remained."

While de Montbrison was assisting the Duchess in the waiting-room to put on her mantle, the Duke said to him:

"Since you are going with us, Conrad, order your carriage to follow ours, unless you conclude to go Saint Remy, you can then make room for me, and I will tell you a good story, much better than that of the tailor."

"I thank, you," said Saint Remy, drily; "I cannot accompany you."

"Then adieu, my dear fellow. Have you been quarelling with my wife? See, she is entering the carriage without speaking a word to you."

The Duchess was in fact springing lightly into her carriage, which was in front of the steps.

"Cousin," said Conrad, while waiting out of deference for de Lucenay. "Get in, get in," said the Duke, stopping for a moment upon the steps to observe the elegant team of the Viscount.

"Are those your sorrels, saint Remy?"

"Yes."

"And your stout Edwards, what a fine looking fellow! That's what I call a crack coachman. See how well he holds the ribbons. To be candid, there is no one like this devil of a Saint Remy, for having everything tip-top."

"Madam de Lucenay and her cousin, are waiting for you, my dear sir," said de Saint Remy, with bitterness.

"Faith, that's true. Farewell, Saint Remy. Oh! I forgot," said the Duke, stopping short; "if you have nothing better to do, come and dine with me to-morrow. Lord Dudley has sent me some grouse and heath-cock, from Scotland; I consider them something superior. It is settled, eh?"

And the Duke joined his wife and Conrad.

Saint Remy, standing alone under the porch, saw the carriage depart. His own advanced.

Casting a look of hatred, of anger, and despair, upon that house which he had so often entered as its master, and from which he was now driven so ignominiously, he entered his carriage.

"Home," said he, gruffly.

"To the hotel," said the footman to Edwards, on closing the door.

Imagine how bitter and mortifying were the reflections of Saint Remy on returning to his dwelling.

As he entered, Boyer, who was waiting for him under the porch, said:

"The Count awaits you up-stairs, sir."

"Very well."

"There is also a man there whom you engaged to meet at ten o'clock, sir, Mr. Petit Jean."

"Well, very well."

"Oh! what an evening!" said Florestan, as he ascended to rejoin his father, whom he found in the room on the story where the interview of the morning had taken place.

"A thousand pardons, father, for not being here when you came; but I——"

"Is the man who has the forged draft, here?" said the Count, interrupting his son.

"Yes, father, he is below."

"Order him up."

Florestan rung, and Boyer appeared.

"Tell Mr. Petit Jean to come up."

"Yes sir;" and Boyer left.

"How good you are, my father, to have remembered your promise."

"I always remember my promises."

"What kindness! How shall I ever prove——"

"I do not wish that my name should be dishonored. It shall not be——"

"It shall not be—no! it shall not be. I swear to you, my father——"

The Count looked at his son in a significant manner, and continued: "No; it shall never be." Then he added, sardonically, "Are you a conjurer?"

"So far as to enable me to read my determination in my own heart."

Florestan's father made no reply. He walked up and down the room, with both hands plunged in the deep pockets of his long frock-coat. His face was very pale.

"Mr. Petit Jean," said Boyer, introducing a mean, dirty, cunning looking man.

"Where is that draft?" said the Count.

"Here it is, sir," said Petit-Jean. (Jacques Ferrand's man of straw,) presenting the draft to the Count.

"Is that it?" said the latter, showing the draft to his son.

"Yes, father."

The Count took from his vest pocket twenty-five notes, of a thousand francs each, handed them to his son, and said:

"Pay it."

Florestan paid, and took the draft with a deep sigh of satisfaction. Mr. Petit Jean placed the notes carefully in an old pocket-book, bowed, and left. The Count de Saint Remy followed him to the hall, while Florestan prudently destroyed the draft.

"At all events, I have the twenty-five thousand francs of Clothilde remaining: if nothing more is discovered, that is a consolation. But how she treated me! I wonder what my father can have to say to Mr. Petit Jean?"

The noise made by locking the door caused the Viscount to start. His father entered. His countenance became paler, as he remarked:

"I thought, father, I heard the key of my door turned."

"Yes; I locked it."

"You, father! and why?" asked Florestan, with astonishment.

The Count so placed himself, that his son could not pass out by a private staircase leading to the basement. Florestan, alarmed, began to notice the sinister look of his father, and anxiously observed all his movements. He experienced, without knowing why, fearful presentiments.

"Father, what is the matter with you?"

"This morning, your first thought on seeing me, was this: 'My father will not allow his name to be dishonored: he will pay, if I can succeed in blinding him by a few hypocritical words of repentance.'"

"Ah! can you believe that——"

"Do not interrupt me. I have not been your dupe: you are influenced by neither shame, regret, nor remorse; you are corrupt to the very core; you have never possessed one sentiment of honesty. So long as you had the means of gratifying your whims, you would not steal: people of your nature call that the honesty of wealth. Then comes indelicacy and meanness; after

which follows crime—forgery. This is but the commencement of your career: it is virtuous and pure, compared to that which awaits you."

"If my conduct does not change, I admit it. But, father, it will change; for I swear to you——"

"It will never change!"

"If——"

"It will never change! Driven from the society in which you have lived till now, you will soon become, like other miserable wretches, inevitably a thief, and, if necessary, an assassin. Such is your future."

"An assassin! I?"

"Yes; because you are a coward."

"I have fought two duels, and I have proved——"

"I tell you, you are a coward: you have preferred ignominy to death. The day will arrive, when the life of another will be added to the catalogue of your crimes. It must not be—it shall not be! I have arrived in time to save my name hereafter from public dishonor. It must end——"

"How, father? end! What do you mean?" cried Florestan, more and more alarmed by the determined expression of his father's countenance, and its increasing paleness.

Suddenly, a violent knocking was heard at the door of the room. Florestan advanced to open it, and with a desire also to put an end to a scene which seriously alarmed him; but the Count seized him with an iron grasp, and held him back.

"Who knocks?" asked the Count.

"Open, in the name of the law—open," said a voice.

"That forgery, then, was not your last!" uttered the Count, in a hoarse voice, casting upon his son a most terrible look.

"Yes, father, on my oath, it was!" said Florestan, endeavoring in vain to disengage himself from his father's vigorous grasp.

"In the name of the law, open," repeated the voice.

"What do you wish?" asked the Count.

"I am the magistrate of this district. I come with a search-warrant, for the discovery of diamonds which the Viscount de Saint Remy is accused of having stolen: Mr. Baudoin, the jeweller, has proofs. If you do not open the door, sir, I shall be compelled to force it."

"Already a thief! then I was not deceived. I came to kill you; I am too late," said the Count, in a low voice.

"To kill me!"

"My name is sufficiently dishonored: let us end it. I have here two pistols. Blow out your brains; if not, I will do it, and I will make known that you have killed yourself from despair, to escape disgrace;" and the Count, with a frightful calmness, drew from his pocket a pistol, which, with the hand that was free, he presented to his son, saying: "Let this end it, if you are not a coward."

After renewed and ineffectual efforts to escape from his father's grasp, Florestan drew back, and became livid with fear. He discovered, from the terrible and unrelenting impression of his father's countenance, that he could expect no mercy from him.

"Father!" he cried.

"You must die!"

"I repent."

"It is too late. Do you hear? they are forcing the door."

"I will expiate my faults."

"They are about to enter. Then I must do the deed."

"Pardon!"

"The door yields! Do you wish——" and the Count applied the muzzle of the weapon to his son's breast.

The noise without indicated, in fact, that the door of the drawing-room could not much longer resist. The Viscount perceived that his fate was sealed. Roused by a sudden and desperate resolution, he ceased his struggles, and said to his father, with firmness and resignation:

"You are right, my father, give me the pistol; sufficient ignominy already rests upon my name; the life that awaits me, is frightful; it is needless to discuss it. Give me the weapon, you will see if I am a coward." And he extended his hand toward the pistol. "But at least one word, only one word of consolation, of pity, of farewell," said Florestan; and his pale and trembling lips, his distorted countenance, evinced the terrible effect of this momentous decision.

"If he is indeed my son," thought the Count, withholding for a moment the pistol, with an emotion of terror and doubt; "if he is my son, I should at least hesitate before sacrificing——"

A prolonged crackling of the drawing-room door, announced that it had been forced.

"Father! they are entering. Oh! I now feel that death is a blessing. Thanks! thanks! your hand father, and pardon me."

Notwithstanding his firmness, the Count could not avoid shuddering. He said in a tone of deep emotion,

"I pardon you."

"Father, the door opens; go to them, that suspicion may not at least, rest upon you; and besides, if they enter here, I shall be prevented from accomplishing it. Farewell."

The steps of several persons were heard in the adjoining apartment. Florestan placed the muzzle of the pistol against his heart. The discharge took place at the moment when the Count, to escape from the horrible spectacle, turned his back and rushed into the library, the hangings of which closed upon him.

At the noise of the explosion, at the pale and haggard visage of the Count, the officer halted suddenly near the entrance, and motioned to his companions not to follow him. Notified by Boyer that the Viscount was in the library with his father, the magistrate understood all, and respected his deep grief.

"Dead!" cried the Count, concealing his face with his hands. "Dead," he repeated in a sorrowful and dejected tone. "But it was just, for better death than disgrace, however frightful."

"Sir," said the magistrate sadly, after a short silence, "spare yourself the melancholy spectacle, and leave the house. Nothing now remains for me but to fulfill another duty, more painful still than that which called me here."

"You are right sir," said the Count de Saint Remy; "as to the victim of the theft, you will request him to present himself to Mr. Dupont, the banker."

"In rue de Richelieu? he is well known," answered the magistrate.

"At what value are the stolen diamonds estimated?"

"At about thirty thousand francs; the person who purchase them, and by whom the theft was discovered, paid your son the price for them."

"I can yet pay that, sir. To-morrow afternoon, let the jeweller call at my banker's, I will see him there."

The magistrate bowed, and the Count left. After the departure of the latter, the magistrate, deeply moved by this unexpected scene, directed his steps slowly toward the library, the curtains of which were closed. He raised them with a feeling of emotion.

"No one!" he exclaimed with astonishment, looking around the room without perceiving the least trace of the tragic event that had just occurred; remarking, however, a small door concealed among the hangings, he ran to it. It was fastened on the side of the private staircase.

"It was all a ruse, it was here that he made his escape," he uttered, with vexation.

In fact, the Viscount, in the presence of his father, actually placed the pistol against his heart; but afterward he very skilfully discharged it under his arm, and instantly disappeared.

Notwithstanding the most active searches through the house, Florestan could not be found. During the interview between his father and the magistrate, he had rapidly gained the basement, then the conservatory, after which he passed through the deserted lane to the Champs-Elysees. We know that a scene of such rife degradation in the midst of opulence is painful. But for the want of proper instruction, the rich classes unhappily have also their miseries, their vices, and their crimes. Nothing is more frequent or more affecting, than the senseless and unfruitful prodigality that we have just described, and which brings in its train, debasement, ruin, and infamy. It is a deplorable, a melancholy spectacle, thus to see a beautiful and flourishing wheat-field, irreparably destroyed by a horde of savage beasts. Can it be doubted that property derived by inheritance, is, and ever should be esteemed sacred and inviolable! Wealth however, that is acquired, or is transmissible, should be displayed with impunity, and in all its magnificence, to the eyes of the poor and wretched masses. Much time must elapse before the frightful disparity which existed between the millionaire Saint Remy and Morel the artisan, shall cease. But in proportion as these unavoidable disparities are sacred and are protected by the law, those who possess so much wealth, become the more *morally accountable* to those who possess nought but honesty, courage, resignation, and industry.

In the eyes of reason, of human rights, and even of well-defined social interests, a large fortune should be considered a hereditary deposit, confided to generous, skilful, firm and prudent men, who, commissioned to increase and distribute it, should also understand the method of fertilizing, enlivening, and meliorating the condition of all who might happily fall within the circumference of their large and useful influence."

At times this is so, but the instances are rare.

How many young men, who, like Saint Remy, become masters, at twenty years of age, of a large patrimony, foolishly dissipate it in idleness, discontent and vice, from ignorance in understanding how to employ it more beneficially for themselves and others!

Others, alarmed at the instability of worldly things, miserly hoard up wealth with avaricious meanness.

Then there are those again who, knowing that a stationary fortune will dwindle away, become either dupes or knaves, by those immoral and hazardous stock speculations, that the laws encourage and protect.

How could it be otherwise? Who would willingly teach this science, these elements and these precepts of *individual*, we may even say, *social economy*, to inexperienced youth? No one.

The rich are thrown into the vortex of society with their riches, as the poor with their poverty. No more attention is given to the superabundance of the one, than to the necessities of the other. Moralists give no thought either to the fortunate or the unfortunate. Is it no longer in our power to fulfill the noble duty that is imposed upon us? Shall we not—by taking pity upon the miseries and constantly increasing afflictions of laborers who exhibit such resignation; by quelling an opposition fatal to all; and by approaching the main question as to the organization of labor—be able to show the beneficial advantages of the *association of labor and capital* united!

Would not an association of honest, just, and intelligent men, who would guaranty the well-being of the mechanic, without diminishing the fortunes of the rich, and who, in establishing between these two classes ties of affection and of gratitude, be able to protect for ever the peace and tranquillity of the State? How powerful would be the consequences of such practical philosophy.

Among the rich, who would then hesitate between the demoralizing and dangerous hazards of stock-jobbing, the severe and unsocial enjoyments of avarice, the foolish vanities of a ruinous dissipation, or an investment at once beneficent and productive, which would expand and infuse ease, morality, happiness and joy, among twenty or more families?

END OF PART THE SIXTH.

PART THE SEVENTH.

CHAPTER I..... THE ADIEUX.

THE morning after the evening when the Count de Saint Remy had been so basely duped by his son, a touching scene occurred at Saint Lazare during the hour of the recreation of the prisoners. On that day, while the other prisoners were walking about, Fleur de Marie seated herself upon a bench near the green basin, which had already been named the bench of Goualeuse. By a kind of tacit agreement which may be ascribed to the increasing influence of the young girl, the prisoners surrendered to her the seat for which she had so great a preference. Her partiality for this seat was owing to the moss, which, like green velvet, encompassed the reservoir, and recalled to her mind the verdure of the fields, to the same extent, as the limpid water with which it was filled, reminded her of the little river of the village of Bouqueval.

To the sad gaze of a prisoner, a tuft of grass is a meadow, a flower is a garden.

Trusting in the kind promises of the Marchioness d'Harville, Fleur de Marie had been expecting for two days to leave Saint Lazare. Although she had no reason to feel uneasy on account of the delay in her liberation, yet, accustomed as she had been to misfortune, she scarcely dared to hope for immediate freedom. Since her return among those creatures, whose appearance and language revived every instant in her soul, the unefflaceable remembrance of her first shame, the sadness of Fleur de Marie had continued to increase, and become more oppressive. And that was not all: a new cause for trouble and sorrow, almost frightful to her, had been created by her exalted feeling of gratitude toward Rodolphe.

Strange circumstance! she never sounded the depth of the abyss into which she had been plunged, but to measure the distance that separated her from the man whose greatness appeared to her superhuman; of the man whose goodness was as exalted to the worthy, as his power was formidable to the wicked. Notwithstanding the respect which stamped her admiration of him, sometimes, alas! Fleur de Marie feared that she recognized in her adoration, evidences of love; though a love that was as concealed as it was deep, as chaste as it was hidden, as desponding as it was chaste.

The unhappy child never dreamed of reading in her own heart, this grievous revelation, until after her interview with the Marchioness d'Harville, smitten herself with a passion for Rodolphe, of which he was ignorant.

After the departure and the promises of the Marchioness, it would have been natural that Fleur de Marie should have experienced a feeling of delight at the expectation of again seeing Rodolphe and her friends at the Bouqueval farm. It was not so, however. Her heart was sadly wrung. The bitter words, the haughty and scrutinizing look of the Marchioness d'Harville, when the poor prisoner, inspired even to enthusiasm, spoke of her benefactor, constantly presented themselves to her mind. With a singular intuition, Goualeuse had discovered a part of Clemence's secret.

"The warmth of my gratidude for Mr. Rodolphe, has wounded this young lady, so beautiful and of a rank so elevated," thought Fleur de Marie. "Now I can comprehend the bitterness of her words; they but expressed a scornful jealously.

"She! jealous of me! it must be then that she loves him, and that I love him also; it must be that my love betrayed me, in spite of myself. Love him! I! I! the disgraced, the unworthy, the wretched creature that I am! Death were a thousand times preferable."

Let us hasten our remarks touching this unhappy child, who appeared doomed to suffer absolute martyrdom, in the exaggeration of that which she called *her love*. To her deep gratitude for Rodolphe, was joined an involuntary admiration of the grace, the strength, the beauty, that distinguished him among all. Nothing could have been more spiritual, nothing purer, than that admiration; but it existed in all its life and power, for the reason that physical beauty is ever attractive. And then again, the voice of consanguinity so often denied when it is unknown and concealed, will sometimes make itself heard. These bursts of passionate tenderness for Rodolphe—by which Fleur de Marie was carried away, and which alarmed her, because in her ignorance she misconstrued their tendency, resulted from mysterious sympathies as evident, and also as incomprehensible, as the resemblance of features. In one word, had Fleur de Marie known that she was the daughter of Rodolphe, the lively interest she felt in him she could have accounted for; then perfectly enlightened, she would have admired, without hesitancy, her father's beauty. This explains the drooping despondency of Fleur de Marie, although she expected every moment to leave Saint Lazare, agreeably to the promise of Madam d'Harville.

Melancholy and pensive, Fleur de Marie was then seated upon her bench near the basin, observing, with a kind of indifferent interest, the lively movements of some daring birds who were sporting upon the curb. On a sudden, she ceased working upon an infant's frock which she was hemming. It is unnecessary to say that this frock was a portion of the new dresses so generously given to Mont Saint Jean by the prisoners, thanks to the touching intervention of Fleur de Marie.

The poor and deformed protegé of Goualeuse, was seated at her feet, attentively occupied in completing a small cap: from time to time, she bestowed upon her benefactress a look of gratitude, timidity, and devotion; such as a dog casts upon his master. The enchanting loveliness, the beauty, the adorable sweetness of Fleur de Marie, had inspired this degraded woman with as much affection as respect.

There is ever something holy and great, in the aspirations of a heart, however debased, which for the first time awakens to gratitude. Until then, Mont Saint Jean had never experienced the religious ardor of a sentiment so new to her.

After a few moments, Fleur de Marie, with a slight shudder, wiped away a falling tear, and actively recommenced her sewing.

"Then you will not rest from your work during the recreation, my good angel?" said Mont Saint Jean to Goualeuse.

"I have given no money to pay for your infant's dresses; I ought to do my part in work," answered the young girl.

"Your part! Heaven be praised! if it had not been for you, instead of this nice white linen, and this warm fustian, I should have had nothing for my child's dresses but those miserable rags, which have been dragged through the mud of the courtyard. It is true, I feel very grateful toward my companions, they have been so good to me; but you! oh, you! what shall I say!" added the poor creature, hesitating and embarrassed, from want of language to express her thoughts. "But stop; there 's the sun, is it not? there's the sun."

"Yes, Mont Saint Jean; go on, I am listening," answered Fleur de Marie, inclining her lovely face toward the hideous visage of her companion.

"But you will laugh at me," continued the latter, sadly; "I want to say something, and yet I do not know how."

"Go on, Mont Saint Jean."

"Your eyes are like those of an angel," said the prisoner, contemplating Fleur de Marie with a species of ecstacy; "those kind eyes give me encouragement, and I will try and tell you what I want to say. There's the sun, is it not? It is very warm; it cheers up the prison. It is very pleasant to look at, and to feel, ain't it?"

"Undoubtedly."

"Well, suppose, then—the sun—it did not make itself, and if we are grateful for it, how much stronger reason there is for——"

"For being grateful to Him who created it. Is that it, Mont Saint Jean? You are right: it is God whom we should adore and pray to."

"That's it! that's what I want to say!" cried the prisoner, joyfully; "that's it! I ought to be grateful to my companions; but you! I ought to adore you, Goualeuse, for it is you who have made me so good, instead of the wicked creature that I was."

"It is God that you should thank, Mont Saint Jean, and not me."

"Oh yes! you, you; I see you. You have been kind to me yourself, and through you others."

"But if I am as good as you say I am, Mont Saint Jean, 't was God who made me so; you must therefore thank Him."

"Well, perhaps it is so, since you say so," continued the prisoner, in an indecisive tone; "so let it be, if it pleases you."

"Yes, my poor Mont Saint Jean, pray to Him often; that will be the best way of proving that you love me."

"If I love you, Goualeuse! Oh! you do not remember what you said to the other prisoners, to prevent them from beating me. '*It is not her alone that you beat, but her child also.*' Well, it is true that I love you; but it is not only for myself that I love you, but for my child also."

"Thank you, Mont Saint Jean, thank you; you please me in speaking so."

And Fleur de Marie, under the influence of deep emotion, extended her hand to her companion.

"Oh! what a fairy little hand! how white and delicate it is!" said Mont Saint Jean, drawing back, as if she was fearful of touching that lovely hand with hers, that were so red and uncleanly. After a moment's hesitation, however, she respectfully touched her lips to the end of the tapering and slender-formed fingers that were presented to her; then, kneeling down suddenly, she cast upon Fleur de Marie an earnest look of profound gratitude."

"Come and sit down alongside of me," said Goualeuse

"Oh, no! not that; never! never!"

"Why not?"

"Observe order, as my brave Mont Saint Jean used to say to me sometimes; officers together, soldiers together, and every one with their equals."

"You are foolish, there is no difference between us."

"No difference? my God! how can you say that, when I see you as I do, as beautiful as a queen? What matters it to you? let me stay on my knees, and look at you as I did just now. Ah, well! who knows? although I am such an ugly creature, my child may, perhaps, look like you. They say that it sometimes happens."

Then, as if in doubt arising from a delicacy almost incredible in such a creature, and fearing that she had wounded the feelings of Fleur de Marie by her singular remark, Mont Saint Jean added, in a melancholy tone:

"No, no, Goualeuse; I was only jesting: I did not mean to look at you with such an intention, unless you were willing. My child will be as ugly as I am; what difference will that make to me? I shall not love it any the less, poor miserable little creature! as they say, it did not ask to be born; and, if it lives, what will become of it?" she said, with a cast-down look. "Alas! yes; my God! what will become of it?"

Goualeuse shuddered at these words.

What, in fact, could be the fate of that miserable, degraded and despised child? What a lot! what a future!

"Do not give way to such thoughts, Mont Saint Jean," said Fleur de Marie; "live in hope that your child will find those who will be charitable enough to watch over and protect it."

"Oh, no! you see there is no possible chance for it, Goualeuse," said Mont Saint Jean, bitterly, and with a dejected air. My meeting with you was all good luck; and let me say, if it will not offend you, that I had much rather it had fallen to my child than to myself. Such a prayer is all I have to give it."

"Then pray to God, that He will grant it."

"Well, then, I will pray, if it will please you, Goualeuse; perhaps it will make me happier. In fact, who could have thought, when Louve beat me, and I was cuffed about by everybody, that a good little angel would assist me, with her beautiful sweet voice, who would be stronger than all the world, even than Louve herself, who is so strong and wicked."

"Yes; but Louve was kind to you, when she reflected that you were doubly to be pitied."

"Yes; thanks to you, that is true; and I shall never forget it. But, tell me, Goualeuse, why is it, that since yesterday she has asked to change her quarters? Louve, notwithstanding her bad temper, seemed to be fond of you."

"She is only a little capricious."

"That's very queer. A woman who came this morning from that part of the prison where Louve is, says that she is entirely changed."

"How so?"

"Instead of quarrelling and threatening everybody, she is sad—very sad. She gets into one corner, and if any one speaks to her, she turns her back, and will not answer them. To see her, now, so still and quiet, who was always so noisy, is very strange, is it not? And this woman also told me another thing; but, as for that, I do not believe it."

"What is that?"

"She said she saw Louve crying. Louve cry! it's impossible."

"Poor Louve! It is on my account that she wished to change her quarters. I have offended her without intending it," said Goualeuse, sighing.

"You! You offend any one, my good angel?"

At this moment the matron entered the yard. After having sought out Fleur de Marie, she approached her, and said with a smile of satisfaction:

"Good news, my child."

"What do you say, madam?" cried Goualeuse, rising.

"Your friends have not forgotten you. They have obtained your liberation. The director has just been advised of it."

"Can it be possible, madam! Ah! what happiness is mine!"

The emotion of Fleur de Marie was so violent, that her countenance became pallid; she placed her hand upon her beating heart, and fell back upon her seat.

"Calm yourself, my child," said Madam Armand, with affectionate tenderness. "Happily, such shocks are not dangerous."

"Ah! madam, how shall I express my gratitude——!"

"It is the Marchioness d'Harville, without doubt, who has obtained your liberty. An elderly woman is waiting to conduct you to those who are interested in you. Wait one moment, and I will return to you. I have a few words to say in the workshop."

It would be difficult to paint the expression of sad desolation, portrayed in the features of Mont Saint Jean, on learning that her good angel, as she called Goualeuse, was about to quit Saint Lazare. Her grief was owing less to the fear of becoming the drudge of the prison, than of being separated from the only being who had ever evinced the least interest in her. Still seated at the foot of the bench, Mont Saint Jean suddenly seized with both hands, the two tufts of bristly hair that hung in disorder from beneath her old black cap, as if to tear them from her head; then, her violent sorrow giving place to an overwhelming despondency, she dropped her head upon both hands, rested her elbows upon her knees, and with her face concealed, she remained silent and immovable.

Notwithstanding her delight at quitting the prison, Fleur de Marie trembled for an instant at the recollection of Chouette and the Schoolmaster, who had exacted from her an oath, that she would not inform her protector, of her unfortunate situation. But these direful thoughts were soon effaced from her mind, at the hope of again seeing at Bouqueval, Madam George and Rodolphe, to whom she was desirous of recommending Louve and Martial. It seemed to her, even, that the exalted sentiment that she reproached herself for experiencing toward her benefactor, when no longer nourished by grief and solitude, would subside into calmness, when she should again return to the rustic occupations, in which she loved so much to participate with the good and simple inhabitants of the farm.

Astonished at the silence of her companion, the cause of which she did not suspect, Goualeuse touched her shoulder lightly, saying:

"Mont Saint Jean, since I am now free, can I not be useful to you in some way?"

On feeling the touch of Goualeuse, the prisoner trembled, let fall her arms upon her knees, and turned her tearful face toward the young girl. So heart-rending was the grief that was exhibited upon the countenance of Mont Saint Jean, that her ugliness almost disappeared.

"Heavens! what is the matter with you!" said Goualeuse to her. "Why do you weep so?"

"You are going away," murmured the prisoner, in a voice interrupted by sobs. "I have never thought, for a moment, of your leaving here, and that I should never—never see you again."

"I assure you, I shall ever remember your friendly feelings, Mont Saint Jean."

"My God! my God! to think that I should love you so much! When I was sitting on the ground at your feet, it seemed to me that I was saved; that I had nothing more to fear. It is not because they beat me that I say so, for I can bear that, but I thought you brought good luck to me, for you pitied me. Yes, it is true; when we are accustomed to be badly treated, we feel more strongly the kindness of others." Then interrupted by renewed sobs, she exclaimed: "Well, go! it is finished—it is finished! It must have happened some day or other. I was wrong in not thinking of it before. It is done! nothing more—nothing more!"

"Come, courage; I shall remember you, as you will always remember me."

"Oh, yes! as for that, they may cut me in a thousand pieces before they will make me disown, or forget you. I shall become old—old as the hills; but your beautiful, angelic face, will ever be before my eyes. The first word that I shall teach my infant to speak, will be your name, 'Goualeuse;' for it will be owing to you, that it will not die of cold."

"Listen to me, Mont Saint Jean," said Fleur de Marie, affected by the warmth of the poor creature. "For yourself I can promise nothing, although I am acquainted with charitable persons; but for your child, it is different: it is innocent, and those persons of whom I speak, may perhaps be willing to take charge of it and bring it up, when you can be separated from it."

"Separated from it! Oh! never—never!" exclaimed Mont Saint Jean, with passionate ardor; "what should I then become, now that I live only for it?"

"But how can you raise it? Whether girl or boy, it should be honest; and in that case——"

"Yes; it must eat the bread of honesty, must it not, Goualeuse? I am well aware of that; it is my strongest wish; I think of it daily. On leaving here, I will not put my foot again upon a bridge. I will make it pick rags, sweep the streets, do anything to be honest: that is due to oneself, if not to the child, when she has the *honor* of having one."

"But who will take care of your child when you are working?" continued Goualeuse. "Would it not be better, if it is possible, as I hope it is, to place it in the country, among kind people, who will make a good girl of it, or a good farmer? Occasionally, you can go and see it; and on some future day you may be able to live with it: in the country, you know, living is so cheap."

"But to be separated from it—to be separated from it! My whole happiness would be wrapped up in it; I, who have no one to love me."

"You must think more of it than of yourself, my poor Mont Saint Jean. In two or three days, I will write to Madam Armand; and if the request that I shall make in favor of your child is granted, you will have no further cause for saying what you said just now, and which pained me so much: '*Alas, my God! what will become of it!*"

Madam Armand, the matron, interrupted the conversation. She came to seek Fleur de Marie.

After sobbing with renewed violence, and bathing the hands of the young girl with her tears, Mont Saint Jean fell backward upon the bench in stupid dejection, without even giving a thought to the promise that Fleur de Marie had just made concerning her child.

"Poor creature!" said Madam Armand, on leaving the yard with Fleur de Marie; "her gratitude toward you gives me a better opinion of her."

On learning that Fleur de Marie was pardoned, the other prisoners, far from feeling jealous at the partiality, testified their delight. Some of them flocked around her, bade her farewell with much cordiality, and frankly congratulated her upon her liberation.

"Never mind," said one of them; "the fair little creature has made us pass one happy moment, when we made up the purse for Mont Saint Jean's baby. That will be remembered at Saint Lazare."

When Fleur de Marie had quitted the prisoner's building, under charge of the matron, the latter said to her:

"Now, my child, go to the vestry for the purpose of depositing your prisoner's clothes, and resuming the country dress, the rustic simplicity of which became you so well. Adieu! You are about to be made happy; for you will soon find yourself under the protection of worthy and respectable persons, and you quit this building never to enter it again. But stop; I will not be unjust to you," said Madam Armand, whose eyes were moistened with tears: "it is impossible for me to conceal from you, how much I have become attached to you, my poor little one!" Then, noticing that Fleur de Marie was also shedding tears, the matron added: "You do not feel sad, I hope, at your departure?"

"Ah! madam, is it not owing to your kind recommendation, that this young lady, to whom I owe my liberty, is interested in my fate?"

"Yes; and what I have done affords me happiness: my presentiments have not deceived me."

At this moment the clock struck.

"It is the hour for commencing labor in the work-shops: I must return. Adieu, again, adieu, my dear child!" and Madam Armand, as deeply agitated as Fleur de Marie, embraced her tenderly. She then said to one of the employees of the house: "Conduct the young girl to the vestry."

In a quarter of an hour afterward, Fleur de Marie, clad in country attire, as we have already seen her at the Bouqueval farm, entered the apartment where Madam Seraphin awaited her.

The housekeeper of the notary, Jacques Ferrand, had come to conduct this unhappy child to the pirate's island!

CHAPTER II.....RECOLLECTIONS.

Jacques Ferrand had easily succeeded in obtaining the prompt release of Fleur de Marie; the decision of the director of the establishment was all that was necessary, to open the gates. Having received information from Chouette, that Goualeuse was imprisoned in Saint Lazare, he had immediately applied to one of his clients, an influential man, and informed him that there was a young girl who had been committed to this prison for some trifling error, for which she had sincerely repented; and was now in danger of being corrupted by association with more abandoned prisoners; that, moreover, the young girl had been highly recommended by respectable people, who had promised to take charge of her after her liberation. He therefore entreated his powerful client, in the name of morality, and as he regarded the final restoration of the unfortunate girl to purity, to solicit her immediate release. In order to shield himself against all subsequent investigation, the notary had particularly requested, that his own name might not be mentioned in the application. And as this request was attributed to the notary's desire to be unostentatious in his acts of philanthropy, it was scrupulously observed by his client. The liberty of Fleur de Marie was solicited and obtained in the name of the client only; who, still further to oblige Mr. Ferrand, sent to him the certificate for her discharge, that he might restore the young girl to her protectors.

Madam Seraphin, when she gave that order to the matron of the prison, informed her, that she was instructed to conduct Goualeuse to the individual who was interested in her welfare. From the excellent testimonials which the matron had given to the Marchioness d'Harville respecting Fleur de Marie, no one doubted that she was indebted for her liberation to the solicitation of her ladyship. The housekeeper of the notary, therefore, excited no distrust in the mind of her victim. Madam Seraphin, when it was necessary, could assume a very amiable appearance. Close observation was necessary, to detect the false, crafty and cruel expression, that lurked beneath her affable face and hypocritical smile. Notwithstanding the total perversion of this woman's nature, and her connivance and participation in the crimes of Jacques Ferrand, even she was struck with the transcendent loveliness of the young creature whom she had committed in her infancy to the tender mercies of Chouette, and whom she was now leading to inevitable death.

"Well, my dear Mademoiselle," said Madam Seraphin, in a honeyed tone, "you must be very much delighted to leave the prison."

"Oh yes, madam: I am probably indebted for my release to the intercession of the Marchioness d'Harville, who was so kind to me."

"You are not mistaken. But let us hasten, for we are already late, and we have quite a journey to perform."

"We are going to Bouqueval farm, to Madam George, are we not?"

"Yes, certainly; we are going into the country to Madam George's," said the housekeeper, in order to remove all suspicions from her victim's mind. And she added, in a facetious tone, "but that is not all: before you see Madam George, a little surprise awaits you. Come, come, our carriage is ready below; what joy you must feel in leaving this place, my dear Mademoi-

selle. Good afternoon, gentlemen," said the housekeeper, bowing to the keeper and his clerk, as she departed with Goualeuse. An assistant followed them, in order to open the gates. The last gate had been just closed, and they found themselves under the vast portico which stretches along the rue Faubourg Saint Denis, when they were met by a young girl, who had called, probably, to visit some of the prisoners. It was Rigolette, with a basket on her arm: the gay, laughing, coquettish Rigolette, with her neat little cap, displaying to full advantage her pretty face; and the rose-colored ribbons upon it, mingling beautifully with the bands of her raven hair. The bottines in which her small feet were hid—thanks to the cat-like tread of the charming grisette—were as unsoiled as when she had left her cage, although a long distance intervened.

"Rigolette!" exclaimed Fleur de Marie, suddenly recognizing at a glance, her companion in the prison, and in her country rides.

"Goualeuse!" the merry voice of the grisette shouted in her turn, as the two lovely creatures threw themselves into each other's arms.

Nothing could have formed a finer study for the artist, than the different style of beauty which these young girls of sixteen possessed, who were now held in each other's embrace.

The one a blonde, with large and melancholy eyes, with a well-defined and perfectly chiselled profile, a somewhat pale and intelligent ideal of one of those country girls of Greuze, so distinguished for the freshness and transparency of their complexion, and the grace and frankness of their expression.

The other, a piquant brunette, with round and rosy cheeks, with black, artless, laughing, wide-awake eyes—a charming emblem of youth, of bouyant cheerfulness—a rare and touching example of happiness in indigence, of friendless honesty, of joy and tranquillity in labor.

After the interchange of their affectionate caresses, the two young beings gazed at each other. Rigolette seemed delighted at the interview—Fleur de Marie abashed. The sight of her friend recalled those few days of unblemished purity and unalloyed happiness, which had immediately preceded her degradation.

"What happiness it affords one to meet you!" said the grisette.

"It is indeed a pleasant surprise; it is a long time since we have seen each other," replied Goualeuse.

"Oh! now I am not surprised that I have missed you for the last six months," said Rigolette, observing the rustic dress of Fleur de Marie; "you live in the country, then?"

"Yes, for some time," said Goualeuse, casting down her eyes.

"And you have come, like me, to visit some one in prison?" said Rigolette.

"Yes—I came—I have just seen some one," said Goualeuse, stammering in her reply, and blushing, and casting down her eyes in shame.

"And you are now returning home, far from Paris, I presume? Dear little Goualeuse, always the same kind creature, do you remember the poor sick woman to whom you gave your mattress, some clothes, and the little money you had left, when we were about going to spend it in the country? for you were even then quite fond of the country."

"But you did not like it much, Rigolette, and you were so obliging as to accompany me for my pleasure alone."

"For my own, also; for you, who are always so serious, became happy, gay, and merry even, when you once are in the fields and the woods. To see you was a great pleasure to me. But let me look at you again: how becoming that little round cap is! how pretty you are! You were born to wear a peasant's cap; it fits you as naturally as a grisette's cap does me. As you are now living according to your taste, I presume you are happy, and I am not surprised at it. When I lost sight of you, I said to myself, 'that excellent little Goualeuse was never made for Paris; she is a perfect little wild flower, as the song says, and such flowers cannot bloom in the capital, the air is not pure enough; so Goualeuse has gone to live with some honest people in the country. That's what happened to you, is it not?"

"Yes," said Fleur de Marie, blushing.

"But I have to reproach you for one thing."

"Me!"

"You ought to have told me that you were going; friends should not have parted in the manner that we did; or you should at least have sent me some news concerning yourself."

"I—I left Paris very suddenly," said Fleur de Marie, with increasing confusion, "so that I could not inform you of it."

"Oh! I am not angry with you, I am too happy at meeting you again. You were quite right in leaving Paris, it is so difficult to live contented here; and poor girls without any friends may be frequently ruined, without being at all guilty themselves, men are so deceitful. Do you remember little Julia who was so pretty, and that sweet little Rosine, a blonde, with black eyes?"

"Yes, I remember them."

"Well, my poor Goualeuse, they have both been deceived and forsaken, until, sinking from one misfortune to another, they have become like the miserable creatures who are confined in this house."

"Good Heaven!" said Fleur de Marie, casting down her head and blushing.

Rigolette, mistaking the meaning of her companion's exclamation, continued: "They were very culpable and wicked, I confess; but because we, my good Goualeuse, have had the good fortune to remain honest—you, because you went into the country, to reside with kind-hearted people, and I, because I had no time to waste on lovers, and preferred my birds to all the sweethearts in the world, and because, moreover, I placed my enjoyments in having a nice little room—we ought not therefore to be severe toward others, who have been less fortunate than ourselves. Who knows but that poverty, deceit or accident, may have not been the cause of the bad conduct of Rosine and Julia, and that, in their situation, we might have been tempted to behave like them?"

"Oh!" said Fleur de Marie, tenderly, "I do not reproach them, I pity them."

"Come, come! we are in haste, my dear Mademoiselle," said Madam Seraphin.

"Allow me a moment, it is such a long time since I have seen my poor Goualeuse," said Rigolette.

"It is already three o'clock, and we have a long distance to go," said Madam Seraphin, not much pleased with this encounter; "I will give you ten minutes more."

"And you?" said Fleur de Marie, taking her friend's hand in both of her own; "you have such a sweet temper, that you are always cheerful and happy, I suppose!"

"I was, until within a few days, happy and cheerful: but now——"

"You have trouble?"

"I? Oh, no! You know what a real gay, merry creature I am; but, unfortunately, everybody is not like me, and as they have their sorrows, I must have mine also."

"Always generous!"

"What can I do! I came here to see a poor girl, a neighbor of mine—a perfect angel who is falsely accused, and deserves all my compassion. Her name is Louise Morel: she is the daughter of a poor artisan, whose misery drove him to madness."

At the name of Louise Morel, the victim of the notary, Madam Seraphin started, and cast a scrutinizing gaze upon Rigolette. The face of the grisette, was entirely unknown to her, however, the housekeeper now paid particular attention to the conversation of the young girls.

"Poor creature!" said Goualeuse; "how happy she must feel that you have not forgotten her in her misfortunes."

"And this is not all, I am truly in bad luck, for this is not the first prison which I have visited; I have just come from another—a prison for men."

"A prison for men!"

"Yes, indeed; I have there another friend in great affliction. You see my basket, it is divided into two parts, one for each; to-day, I have brought some clothes to Louise, and I have just carried some articles to poor Germain, my prisoner's name. I cannot think of the scene which has just taken place between us, without weeping; I know that it is foolish, but I cannot help it."

"And why do you feel like weeping?"

"Poor Germain is so distressed in being compelled to associate with the wicked men in that prison; he is completely downcast; he has a taste for nothing, he has lost all his appetite, he will not eat anything which I bring him, and is growing thin every day. I perceived that he had no appetite, and I said to myself, 'I will make him a nice dish which he liked very much when he was my neighbor.' When I say a nice dish, I mean that it was some excellent yellow potatoes, mashed with some butter and milk; I filled a clean pretty cup with it and took it to the prison, and said to him, that I had made it with my own hands as I used to do when we lived so happily together, and that I thought that it would revive his appetite, but alas! it did not."

"Why?"

"The moment he saw the cup in which I was in the habit of receiving my milk when he was my neighbor, he burst into tears, and I could not help following his example, although I tried to restrain myself. You see in what miserable luck I am; I thought I was doing well; I thought to console; but instead of that, I made him more sad."

"Yes, but his tears must have been sweet to him?"

"Yet I should have preferred to have afforded some livelier kind of pleasure; but I am talking about him without telling you who he is. He is a former neighbor of mine, the most honest young man in the world; gentle and timid as a young girl, whom I loved like a brother."

"I cannot imagine, then, how his troubles have become yours?"

"Can you not? but you will see what an excellent heart he has; when I went away, I asked as I always do, 'what he wanted,' saying in a laughing manner, 'that I was his little housekeeper, and that I would be very attentive, active, and industrious:' he tried to smile and asked me to bring him one of the novels of Walter Scott, which he had formerly read to me during the evenings while I was at work; the novel is called Ivan—Ivanhoe, that is it, I liked the novel so much, that he read it to me twice. Poor Germain, he was so kind."

"He wishes to revive the recollection of his happy hours."

"Certainly, for he asked me to go to the same reading-room, not to hire but to buy the books which we formerly read together: yes, to buy them, and you can judge what a sacrifice it must have been for him, for he is as poor as we are."

"Kind, excellent young man!" said Gonaleuse, quite moved.

"You are as much affected as I was, my poor Gonaleuse. When he intrusted me with that commission, and you will also understand, that the more I tried to laugh, the more I felt like weeping; for to cry twice during a visit which I made expressly to cheer him, was rather too much; so in order to amuse him, I began to tell him a funny story about an old Jew, one of the characters in the novel, which had amused us very much when we read it. But the faster I talked, the faster the big tears would come to his eyes and roll down his cheeks. As for poor me, my heart was almost broken; I had tried with all my might for a quarter of an hour to restrain myself, but I could not, and I finally gave up and cried as he did. When I left him he was sobbing, and I said to myself, vexed at my folly, 'if that is the way that I cheer and console him, what is the use of going to see him? It is astonishing in what a manner I have succeeded in making him laugh!'"

At the name of Germain, another victim of the notary, Madam Seraphin redoubled her attention.

"And what has the young man done to be imprisoned for?" asked Fleur de Marie.

"He?" exclaimed Rigolette, giving vent to her indignation; "he is persecuted by a rascally old notary, who is also the denouncer of Louise."

"Of Louise, whom you have come to this prison to visit?"

"Certainly, She was the servant of this ugly old notary, and Germain was his clerk. It would take too much time to tell you of what he wickedly accuses the young man. But that old villain is perfectly enraged after poor innocent creatures, who have never harmed him in the world. But, patience—patience—each one in his turn."

Rigolette spoke the last words, with an accent which gave considerable uneasiness to the exemplary Madam Seraphin, and joining in the conversation herself, she said, in a mellowed voice:

"My dear Mademoiselle, it is late, and we must go, for our friends are waiting for us. I can imagine that what your companion is telling you must interest you greatly, for it moves even me, who am a stranger, both to the young man and the young woman. Is it possible there are people so wicked in this world! and what is the name of the notary?"

Rigolette had no reason in the world for suspecting Madam Seraphin, but she remembered, notwithstanding, the caution of Rodolphe, who had told her to be silent as to the protection which was extended to Germain and Louise, and she regretted that she had been so far carried away by her feelings, as to say, "patience, each one in his turn."

"That wicked man, madam, is called Mr. Ferrand," and then added, in order to cover her former indiscretion: "It is so much the worse for him to torture Louise and Germain, since they have no one to take any interest in them."

"What a misfortune! I was in hopes that the contrary was the case, when you counselled us to have patience. I thought you relied on some protector to sustain the unfortunate creatures against that wicked man."

"Alas, madam!" added Rigolette, in order to banish entirely any suspicions she might have aroused. "Who would be generous enough to take the part of those poor young people, against a man as rich and powerful as Mr. Ferrand?"

"Oh, there are hearts generous enough for that," said Fleur de Marie, after a moment's reflection, and with an enthusiasm which she found it difficult to repress. "Yes, I know of one who regards it as his first and highest duty to protect and defend the oppressed. The one of whom I speak is as kind to the honest, as he is severe to the wicked."

Rigolette looked upon Gonaleuse in astonishment, and it was on the grisette's lips to tell her companion, thinking of Rodolphe, that she also knew of one, who was the champion of the weak against the strong; but faithful to the caution which her voisin had given her—as she called the Prince—she replied to Fleur de Marie:

"Do you know, indeed, one who is generous enough to assist the poor and unfortunate, in that manner?"

"Yes; and although I have promised to implore his compassion and assistance, in behalf of others, I am sure that if he knew of the unmerited misfortunes of Louise and Germain, he would rescue them from this false accusation, and punish their persecutor, for his justice and wisdom are inexhaustible."

Madam Seraphin looked upon her victim with surprise.

"This little girl is more dangerous than we first supposed," said she to herself. "Even if I had compassion upon her, the last words which she has spoken, would induce me to facilitate the *accident* which is about to befall her to the extent of my power."

"My dear, good Gonaleuse, since you have such a generous friend, I entreat you to recommend to him my Germain and my Louise, for they are undeserving of their fate," said Rigolette, thinking that her friends would be safer with two protectors than with one.

"Depend upon it," said Fleur de Marie, "I will exert in behalf of Louise and Germain, all the influence which I possess with Mr. Rodolphe."

"Mr. Rodolphe!" shouted Rigolette, in great surprise.

"Yes, the same," said Gonaleuse.

"Mr. Rodolphe! A travelling clerk!"

"I do not know his occupation. But why this surprise?"

"Because I know myself a Mr. Rodolphe."

"Perhaps it is not the same one."

"Let us see. Describe yours."

"He is young."

"That's it."

"A face beaming with magnanimity and kindness."

"The same! just so with mine," exclaimed Rigolette, more and more astonished, as she asked, "Has he brown hair? and does he wear a small moustache?"

"Yes."

"In short, he is tall and slender, with a charming figure, and very genteel appearance for a travelling clerk. Is yours the same?"

"Certainly, it is the same!" said Fleur de Marie. "Only it surprises me, that you should think that he is a travelling clerk!"

"I am sure of that, for he told me so."

"Do you know him?"

"Why, he is my voisin. He occupies a room on the fifth floor, next to mine."

"What, he himself?"

"What is there surprising in that? He earns only fifteen or eighteen hundred francs a-year, and he cannot keep a more expensive room; although there is precious little economy about him, for he does not even know what his clothes cost."

"No, no; it cannot be the man I mean," said Fleur de Marie, reflecting.

"Is your friend, then, remarkable for economy?"

"The being to whom I allude, Rigolette," said Fleur de Marie, with enthusiasm, "is very powerful; his name is spoken with love and veneration; his presence awes you; and one feels like kneeling before his greatness and kindness."

"Then I do not know what to make of the mystery, my poor Gonaleuse. Your Mr. Rodolphe is not like mine: he is neither powerful nor imposing; he is only exceedingly good-natured and very merry. People don't kneel to him; on the contrary, he offered to help me wax my floor, and agreed to take me to walk on Sundays; so that you see he is no great lord. But what am I talking about? 'twould be a fine thing for me to go and take a walk, while my poor Germain and my poor Louise are in prison!"

For a few moments, Fleur de Marie was reflecting deeply. She remembered that, at the time of her first interview with Rodolphe at the *tapis-franc* of the ogress, he had the appearance and assumed the language of the habitual guests. Could he not also play the part of a travelling clerk, in the house in which Rigolette lived? But what could be his motive for this new transformation?

The grisette, observing the thoughtful mood of her companion, said:

"It will be of no use to think so much about it, my poor Goualeuse: we cannot ascertain to a certainty whether we are both acquainted with the same Mr. Rodolphe. When you see yours again, speak to him of me, and when I see mine, I will speak to him of you; and in that way we shall learn whether they are one and the same."

"And where do you live, Rigolette?"

"No. 17, rue du Temple."

"This is valuable information to possess," soliloquized Madam Seraphin, who had listened attentively to the conversation between the young girls. "This Mr. Rodolphe, a mysterious and powerful person, occupies, under the disguise of a travelling clerk, a room in the same house with Bradamanti and the Morels, next to that of the little seamstress, who knows more than she seems to be willing to tell. If the pretended clerk and the grisette continue to interfere with other people's business, it is well to know where to find him."

"When I have spoken to Mr. Rodolphe, I will write to you; and I will give you my address, that you may be able to answer it. But repeat to me yours, so that I shall not forget it."

"I have with me one of the cards which I leave with my employers;" and she gave to Fleur de Marie a small card, on which was written, in a very beautiful hand, "*Mademoiselle Rigolette, rue du Temple, No.* 17." "It looks as if it was engraved, does it not?" added the grisette; "it is the writing of poor Germain, who wrote these cards for me in former days. He was so good and so obliging; and it seems to me that he was endowed with these excellent qualities, that I might have a still greater affection for him in his misfortunes. I reproach myself for having so long neglected to love him."

"You love him, then?"

"Indeed, I do. I must certainly have some pretext for visiting him. Confess that I am a singular girl," said Rigolette, now smothering a sigh, now bursting into laughter; now in tears, now in smiles, as the poet says.

"You are as kind and generous as ever," said Fleur de Marie, pressing her friend's hand.

Madam Seraphin had probably gained sufficient information to satisfy herself, from the conversation of the young girls; for she said, in an almost severe tone, to Fleur de Marie:

"Come, come, my dear Mademoiselle, let us go; it is already late, and we have lost a quarter of an hour."

"How cross that old woman looks! I do not like her face," said Rigolette, in a low voice, to Fleur de Marie. Then she continued, in a louder tone: "When you come to Paris, my poor Goualeuse, do not forget me. Your visit will give me great pleasure. I shall be delighted to pass a day with you, to show you my room and my little birds—my only luxury."

"I will try to come and see you; but I will certainly write to you. Farewell, Rigolette; adieu! You do not know how happy I have been made by seeing you."

"And I, also; but it will not be the last time, I hope. I am impatient to know whether your Mr. Rodolphe and mine are the same: write to me soon upon the subject, I entreat you."

"Yes, yes. Adieu!"

"Adieu, my good little Goualeuse!"

And the two young girls embraced each other tenderly, concealing their emotion.

Rigolette now entered the prison to visit Louise, thanks to the permission which Rodolphe had obtained for her.

Fleur de Marie entered the carriage with Madam Seraphin, who told the driver "to go to Batignolles, and to stop at the barrière." A cross road led almost directly from that place to the banks of the Seine, not far from the Island of the Ravageur. Fleur de Marie was so ignorant of Paris, that she did not perceive that the carriage followed a direction opposite to the barrière Saint Denis; and it was not until the carriage stopped at Batignolles, that she told Madam Seraphin, who asked her to alight:

"It seems to me, madam, that this is not the direction to the farm of Bouqueval; and how can we proceed on foot, from this place to the farm?"

"All that I can tell you, Mademoiselle, is, that I am following the instructions of your benefactress; and you will wound her feelings if you refuse to go with me."

"Oh, madam! do not think that I refuse," said Fleur de Marie. "You have been sent by them, and I follow you with blind confidence. But tell me, I beg of you, if the health of Madam George is good?"

"She is very well indeed."

"And Mr. Rodolphe?"

"Perfectly well, also."

"You know him then, madam? But when I spoke to Rigolette about him, a moment since, you said nothing respecting him."

"Because I had orders to say nothing."

"It is then himself who has ordered you!"

"You are very inquisitive, my dear Mademoiselle," said the housekeeper, laughing.

"Pardon my questions, madam," said Fleur de Marie, smiling "Since we go on foot to the place of our destination, I shall soon learn what I am desirous of ascertaining."

"We shall be there, my dear Mademoiselle, in the course of a quarter of an hour."

The housekeeper, leaving behind the last houses of Batignolles, walked with Fleur de Marie along a turf road. The day was warm and beautiful; the sky was partially veiled with purple-colored clouds; the declining sun threw oblique rays on the heights of Colombe, the opposite side of the stream. As Fleur de Marie approached the banks of the Seine, her pale cheek was slightly flushed, and she inhaled with delight the fresh and bracing air of the country. Her countenance was so radiant with joy, that Madam Seraphin said to her:

"You seem to be very happy, my dear Mademoiselle."

"Oh, yes, madam! I am about to see again, Madam George and Mr. Rodolphe; and I have some unfortunate beings to recommend to their protection, whom I hope they will relieve. How could I be otherwise than happy? Were I sad, however, a day so beautiful as this would dissipate it all. The sky is so cheerful, dappled with those purple clouds; and the grass is very green, for this season; and yonder, behind those willows, the river is flowing. How broad it appears; and the sun pours upon it such dazzling rays, that they seem like the reflection of gold. Within the little basin, in the prison-yard, it shone in the same manner this morning. God does not withhold from the poor prisoner, the rays of the sun," added Fleur de Marie, with devout gratitude; and then, as if the recollection of captivity had augmented her rapture at her deliverance, she exclaimed with all the enthusiasm of artless joy:

"Do, madam, see that charming little island in the middle of the river, encircled with willows and poplars; and that white house, near the water. How delightful that house must be in summer, when the trees are covered with foliage! What silence, what coolness, what retirement could be found there!"

"Indeed!" said Madam Seraphin, with a strange smile; "I am delighted that you find the island so pleasant."

"Why, madam?"

"Because we are going there."

"What, to that island!"

"Yes: does it surprise you!"

"I confess that it does."

"And if you were to find your friends there?"

"What do you say?"

"All your friends collected together, to celebrate your release from prison, would you not be agreeably surprised?"

"Can it be possible? Madam George, Mr. Rodolphe?"

"Once, again, Mademoiselle, I have forgotten all my discretion; with your little innocent ways, you worm everything out of me."

"Am I to meet them there? Oh, madam! how my heart beats."

"Do not walk so fast; I can conceive your impatience; but I cannot keep up with you, little crazy thing!"

"Pardon me, madam; but I am anxious to arrive."

"It is quite natural, and I do not reproach you for it."

"How the road descends. Will you not take my arm, madam?"

"I cannot refuse it, my dear Mademoiselle; you are sprightly and strong, while I am old."

"Lean upon me, madam; do not fear to fatigue me."

"Thank you, my dear; your assistance has been very serviceable; this descent was very steep, but we are on a fine road now."

"Is it true, that I am to see Madam George? I can scarcely realize it."

"Have a little more patience. Within a quarter of an hour you will see her; and you will believe it then."

"What I cannot understand," said Fleur de Marie, after a moment's reflection, "is, why Madam George has left the farm."

"You begin to be inquisitive again, my dear Mademoiselle—always inquisitive."

"I am very curious, am I not, madam?"

"To punish you, I have almost a mind to tell you the surprise which your friends are preparing for you."

"A surprise for me, madam?"

"Do not question me; you make me talk in spite of myself."

We will now leave madam Seraphin and her victim, on their way to the river; and we will conduct the reader to the island of the ravageur.

CHAPTER III. ..... THE BOAT.

DURING the night, the appearance of the island of the Ravageur did not belie its actual character; but when the sun was shining in full brilliancy upon it, nothing could appear more delightful than this horrible abode of sin.

It was encircled with willows and poplars, and almost entirely covered with thick grass, while here and there could be discerned winding paths of yellow sand. The island contained a small vegetable garden, and a large orchard of fruit-trees, in the centre of which could be seen the hut thatched with straw, to which Martial wished to retire with François and Amandine. That extremity of the island terminated in a sort of embankment formed of posts, to prevent the earth from washing away. An extended arbor stretched from the house to the landing, designed to support during the summer, branches of the grape-vine and the hop, under which were spread tables for the guests who visited the place.

At one end of the house, which was covered with tiles, there was a wood-shed, and a granary formed from a small wing which was much lower than the main building. Almost directly over this wing could be seen a window, with shutters lined with sheet iron, and barricaded by two iron bars fastened to the wall by strong hooks. Three boats were floating in the river, fastened to a post of the wharf, in one of which Nicholas could be seen crouching, and trying the action of a valve which he had opened in it; while, standing on a bench by the side of the arbor, Calebasse could be discerned, with her hand up to her eyes, as a sort of blind, and looking earnestly in the direction from which Madam Seraphin and Fleur de Marie were to approach the island.

"I can see nobody yet, young nor old," said Calebasse, jumping down from her bench, and addressing Nicholas; "it will be as it was yesterday, and our watching will be in vain, if these women don't come in half an hour, for we must then start; the job of Bras-rouge is better than this one, and he is waiting for us. The brokeress is to be at the Champs Elysees at five o'clock, and Chouette told us this morning that we must be there before her."

"You are right," said Nicholas, leaving his boat; "the valve is in good order, it works like a charm. If this woman makes us wait much longer, we shall lose both of the jobs."

"At any rate, Chouette and Barbillon must have our help; they can do nothing without us."

"That is true; for while the job is going on, Bras-rouge must be on the outside of his tavern, to keep watch, and Barbillon alone is not strong enough to drag the old woman into the cave, for she will fight like a tigress."

"Did not Chouette tell us, in a laughing way, that she boarded the Schoolmaster in that cave?"

"Not in that one, but in another, which is deeper still, and which is overflowed when the river is high."

"Does it not make him furious to be shut up there, all alone, blind as he is?"

"If he had eyes, he could not see anything there, for it is as dark as an oven."

"After he has amused himself with singing all the songs that he knows, he must find it devilish dull there!"

"Chouette says he diverts himself with hunting rats, and the cave is full of that sort of game."

"By the way, Nicholas, speaking of people who are furious, there is one up there," said Calebasse, pointing to the window with iron bars, "who must be somewhat wrathy."

"He is asleep; he has stopped knocking since morning, and his dog no longer barks."

"Perhaps he has strangled him, in order to eat him; for, as they have been for two days without food, they must both be savage with hunger and thirst."

"That is their own look-out; Martial can play the turtle for a long time yet, but, when he does give in, we can say that he died of some sickness, which will prevent any disturbance."

"Do you think so?"

"To be sure; while going this morning to Asnières, mother met with Ferot the fisherman: as he was surprised not to have seen Martial for two days, mother told him that he was sick, and did not leave his bed, and that we despaired of his life. Father Ferot swallowed it as if it had been honey, and he will report it to the others; so that, when the thing takes place, it will appear quite natural."

"Yes, but he won't die suddenly; it takes a long time to kill a man in that way."

"What else could we do with him? we couldn't subdue him in any other manner. When Martial once gets mad, there is no managing him; he is as furious as the devil, and strong as hell itself, and as his suspicions were alive, we couldn't have approached him slily; but now that his door is pretty thoroughly nailed up, and his window barricaded, what can he do?"

"He would have broken down the bars of the window by digging at the plaster, if I had not cut his hands with the hatchet every time he attempted it."

"What sport you had!" said the brigand; "I should have liked that fun myself."

"I had to watch him until you could bring the sheet-iron from father Micou's."

"How enraged our dear brother must have been!"

"He gnashed his teeth like a man possessed with the devil; two or three times he attempted to knock me down through the bars with his stick, but then having only one hand at liberty, he could not work at the bars, which was all that I wanted to prevent."

"Fortunately, there is no chimney in the room."

"And that the door is solid and his hands wounded, for otherwise, he would be able to make a hole through the floor."

"The beams! the beams! do you suppose he could get through them? no, no, there is no danger of his escaping; the blinds are well lined with sheet-iron and fastened by the bars—the door is nailed upon the outside with spikes three inches long. His coffin is more solid than if it were made of oak or lead."

"What shall we do when Louve leaves her prison and comes to see her man as she calls him?"

"We will tell her to search."

"Do you know that if mother had not shut up those rascally children, that they would have gnawed away at the door like rats, in order to set Martial free? That little François has become a perfect demon since he suspects we have boxed up the old brother."

"Are they going to be left in the room up-stairs while we leave the island? Their windows have no bars, and they might be able to descend."

At this moment, some cries and sobs were heard from the house, which attracted the attention of Calebasse and Nicholas; they saw the door of the lower room, which was open, shut violently; and within a minute the pale and sinister face of the fiendish mother was seen through the bars of the kitchen window, and she made a signal to her children to approach.

"Come, there is some trouble; I'll bet that it is François again, he is in open revolt. Confound Martial! without his interference, the boy would have worked nicely: keep a good look-out, and if you see the two women approach, call me."

While Calebasse again mounted the bench to watch for Goualeuse and Madam Seraphin, Nicholas went into the house. Little Amandine was on her knees in the middle of the kitchen, begging mercy for François. Enraged beyond measure, the young boy stood in one corner of the kitchen, brandishing the hatchet of Nicholas, as if he had determined to make a desperate resistance to his mother's will. Silent and impassible as ever, the widow pointed to the door of the cellar which was partly open, and intimated to Nicholas, that it was her pleasure that François should be shut up within.

"I will not be shut up there," said the determined child, whose eyes sparkled like those of a young wild-cat; "you wish to starve Amandine and myself there, as you are starving Martial up-stairs."

"For God's sake, mother, leave us in our room up-stairs, as we were yesterday," said the little girl, in a supplicating tone, and joining her hands; "in that dark cellar, we shall be frightened to death."

The widow looked at Nicholas impatiently, as if to reproach him for not executing her orders, and again pointed to François with an imperious sign.

"If you wish to shut me up there, I do not care whether it is mother, brother, or Calebasse, I shall strike, and the hatchet is sharp."

Nicholas was as well convinced as his mother, of the imminent necessity of preventing the children from rendering any assistance to Martial while the house was deserted, and also to hide from them the crimes which were about to be committed; for, from their window, they could see that portion of the river where Fleur de Marie was to find her grave.

Nicholas, ferocious as he was, and fearing but little a blow from the hatchet, hesitated to approach his desperate brother. The widow, enraged at the delay of her son, pushed him rudely by the shoulders toward François. But Nicholas moving back, exclaimed:

"When he has wounded me, mother, what shall I do? I shall

have need of both my arms soon, and I still feel the blow which that villain Martial gave me."

The widow shrugged her shoulders in contempt, and advanced a step toward François.

"Don't approach me, mother," exclaimed François, furiously. "I will pay you for all the blows which you have given me and Amandine."

"Brother, suffer yourself to be locked up," exclaimed Amandine; "do not strike our mother!"

Nicholas suddenly saw upon a chair a woollen blanket which had been used for ironing. He seized it, unfolded it, and skillfully threw it over François's head, who finding himself suddenly enveloped in its fold, could make no use of his weapon. Nicholas now rushed upon him, and with the assistance of his mother, forced him into the cellar. Amandine had remained upon her knees in the middle of the kitchen, but as soon as the fate of her brother was decided, she arose, and, notwithstanding her terror, followed him quietly into the cellar.

The door was locked, with a double turn, upon the brother and sister.

"It is, after all, the fault of that villain Martial, that these children are so furious," said Nicholas.

"Nothing has been heard from his room since morning," said the widow, shuddering; "nothing."

"That is what proves that you were right, in telling father Ferot, the fisherman at Asnières, that Martial had been sick in bed for two days. With that preparation, people will not be surprised."

After a moment's thought, and as if to escape from painful reflections, the widow said:

"Did Chouette come here while I was at Asnières?"

"Yes, mother."

"Why did she not remain, to accompany us to the tavern of Bras-rouge? I mistrust her."

"You seem to be mistrusting everybody, mother. To-day it is Chouette; yesterday, it was Bras-rouge."

"Bras-rouge is at liberty. My son is at Toulon, and they were both engaged in the same theft."

"Why do you always repeat the same thing over? The reason is, that Bras-rouge is as keen as a razor. Chouette did not remain, because she had an engagement at two o'clock near the Observatory, with the tall man in mourning, for whom she and the Schoolmaster, and Tortillard, carried away the young country girl; and it was Barbillon who drove the hack, that the gentleman in black hired for the affair. How, then, can you mistrust Chouette? She tells us her jobs, but we do not tell her ours, for she knows nothing of this drowning affair. Be easy, mother; wolves do not devour each other. We shall make a good business out of the brokeress, who sometimes carries twenty or thirty thousand francs worth of diamonds in her bag, and within two hours we shall have hold of her in the cave of Bras-rouge. Thirty thousand francs worth of diamonds! Think of that!"

"And while we hold the brokeress, Bras-rouge will keep watch on the outside of his tavern," said the widow, with a suspicious look.

"And where would you have him remain? If some one comes to the house, must he not attend to them? And does he not prevent people from approaching the place where we shall be at work?"

"Nicholas, Nicholas!" shouted Calebasse; "I see the two women."

"Quick, quick, mother! Put on your shawl. I will put you ashore; that will be so much gained," said Nicholas.

The widow now put upon her head a black cap, instead of a black handkerchief; enveloped herself in a large tartan shawl of gray and white; closed the door of the kitchen; placed the key behind one of the blinds of the first floor, and followed her son to the landing.

Almost in spite of herself, before quitting the island, she cast a long look toward the window of Martial, frowned, bit her lips, and after a sudden shuddering, muttered; "It is his own fault! his own fault!"

"Do you see them yonder, Nicholas, upon the bank? There is a peasant girl, and a city woman," exclaimed Calebasse, pointing to Madam Seraphin and Fleur de Marie, upon the other side of the river, who were descending a path which wound round the high bank, where the plaster-kiln was seen.

"Let us wait for the signal," said Nicholas. "Don't let us spoil the job."

"You must be blind! Do you not recognize the large woman, who came here the day before yesterday, in that same orange shawl? See also the little peasant girl—how she hurries along! She must be a good-natured girl, or she does not know what is in reserve for her."

"Yes, I recognize the large woman. Come, it is growing warm—it is growing warm. Now, let us have it all understood between us, Calebasse," said Nicholas. "I will take the old woman and the young one into this boat, with the valve; you will follow in the other, and look out to ply the oar in the right manner, that I may jump at once into your boat, as soon as I have raised the valve."

"Don't be afraid. It is not the first time that I have managed an oar."

"I am not afraid of getting drowned. You know how I can swim. But if I did not get into the other boat, the women in struggling against drowning, might grasp me, and I have no desire to drink water in their company."

"The old woman makes a signal with her handkerchief; they have now reached the shore."

"Come, come; aboard, mother," said Nicholas, releasing the boat. "Come into this boat with the valve, so that the two women may suspect nothing; and you, Calebasse, jump into the other, stretch your arms, and strain away at the oar. Oh, here, take my hook by your side; it is as sharp as a spear, and may be of use. And now, let us be off," said the bandit, placing in the boat of Calebasse a long iron hook, with a sharp point.

Within a few moments, the skiff rowed by Nicholas, and also the one managed by Calebasse, reached the opposite shore, where Fleur de Marie and Madam Seraphin had been waiting for several minutes. While Nicholas was fastening his boat to a stake upon the shore, Madam Seraphin approached him, and said, in a low, quick voice, "Say that Madam George is waiting for us;" and then added, in a loud tone:

"We are somewhat late, my boy."

"Yes, my good lady; Madam George has already inquired for you several times."

"You see, my dear Mademoiselle, that Madam George is waiting for us," said Madam Seraphin, turning to Fleur de Marie, who in spite of her confidence, felt her heart downcast at the frigid faces of the widow, Calebasse, and Nicholas; but the name of Madam George restored her tranquillity, and she replied:

"I am very impatient to see her, and am happy that it is only a short distance across."

"The dear lady will be delighted." Then, addressing Nicholas, Madam Seraphin said: "Come, my boy, bring your boat nearer, that we may get in;" and added, in a low voice, "She must be drowned, absolutely drowned; if she rises to the top of the water, you must force her underneath."

"That is enough—enough; and when I make you a signal, give me your hand. She will sink all alone. I have arranged everything, and you have nothing to fear;" and with ferocious composure, unmoved by her touching loveliness, he gave his arm to Fleur de Marie, who leaned upon it gently, and entered the boat.

"It is your turn," said Nicholas to Madam Seraphin, as he gave his hand to her.

Was it a presentiment, distrust of her confederate, or only the fear of not jumping quick enough from one boat to the other, that induced the housekeeper of Jacques Ferrand to say to Nicholas, stepping back:

"I believe that I will go in the other boat;" and she went to take a seat by the side of Calebasse.

"All right," said Nicholas, exchanging a significant glance with his sister; and with the end of his oar he gave a vigorous impulse to his own boat.

His sister followed his example, as soon as Madam Seraphin had seated herself near her.

Standing motionless upon the shore, and indifferent to the fearful scene which was passing before her, the eyes of the abstracted widow were fastened upon the window of Martial, which could be discerned through the poplar-trees.

The two boats, in the first of which were Nicholas and Fleur de Marie, and in the second Madam Seraphin and Calebasse, had slowly left the shore.

CHAPTER IV. ..... THE HAPPINESS OF MEETING AGAIN.

Before informing the reader of the denouement of the frightful tragedy which which was approaching its consummation, it will be necessary for us to make a retrograde movement. A few moments after Fleur de Marie had departed from Saint Lazare, Louve had also been released from prison, owing to the kind recommendations of Madam Armand and the director, who wished to recompense her for the charitable action toward Mont

Saint Jean, and therefore discharged her from prison a few days before her sentence had expired. Moreover, a complete change seemed to have taken place in the mind of a creature who, heretofore, had been the most corrupt, the most vile, and the most ungovernable. The picture of the wild, solitary, and peaceful life which Fleur de Marie had drawn, was incessantly displayed before her mind.

To retire to some secluded forest with Martial, was now the controlling idea of her soul; against which her former corrupt instinct had in vain revolted, after she had retired into the other department of the prison, in order to avoid the increasing influence of Goualeuse upon her mind. To produce this sincere conversion, which had thus far been found strong enough to withstand the ferocious assaults of her own evil habits, and the perverse example of her companions, Fleur de Marie, following the impulse of her own good sense, had reasoned in this manner:

"Louve is a most violent and resolute creature, and loves Martial with all the strength of her nature. She will, therefore, accept with joy, the prospect of renouncing a life of shame—to which, for the first time, she feels a repugnance—to devote herself entirely to that wild, rough man, with whose inclinations she so strongly sympathizes—that man who seeks the solitude of the woods, as much through the dictates of his taste, as to avoid the universal anathema which pursues his infamous family." Assisted by these facts, which she had drawn from Louve, by her conversations with her, Fleur de Marie had given an honorable direction to the wild love and fierce character of the outcast, and had changed a ruined girl into a woman whose purposes were now honest and commendable.

Confiding in the support which Fleur de Marie had promised her, in the name of an unknown benefactor, Louve was now on her way to make the praiseworthy proposition to Martial, not without many bitter fears of a refusal; for Goualeuse, in making her blush for the past, had also awoke the consciousness of the nature of her relation to Martial.

When she was once released, Louise only thought of seeking Martial, from whom she had not heard for several days. In the hope of finding him at the island of the Ravageur; and with the determination of waiting for him there, if she did not find him, she employed the driver of a vehicle, whom she paid well, to convey her rapidly to the bridge of Asnières; over which she passed about a quarter of an hour before the arrival of Madam Seraphin and Fleur de Marie, to the bank of the river, near the plaster-kiln, whither they had come on foot, from the barrière. When Martial did not himself come with his boat to convey Louve to the island, she had been in the habit of employing an old fisherman, named father Ferot, who lived near the bridge.

About four o'clock in the afternoon, a gig stopped near the entrance of one of the streets of Asnières, and Louve, having given five francs to the driver, jumped from the gig and went in haste to the house of father Ferot, the fisherman.

Having left behind her the prison uniform, Louve wore a dress of dark-green merino; a red shawl, in imitation of cashmere; and a lace cap, ornamented with ribbons. Her hair was hardly combed, for in her impatience to see Martial, she had dressed with more haste than care. After so long a separation, any other creature would have paid the greatest attention to her dress, in order to present her most attractive appearance at the first interview. But Louve was above all considerations of that kind; all that her warm and earnest temperament desired, was to see Martial with as little delay as possible; not only from the impulse of her passionate love, but also from the wish of confiding to him the salutary resolution which she had adopted during her conversation with Fleur de Marie. Louve soon reached the house of the fisherman, and found father Ferot, an old man, with gray hair, seated before his door, and engaged in mending his nets.

The very moment she came in sight of him, Louve exclaimed:

"Your boat, father Ferot! quick, quick! your boat!"

"Ah! is that you, Mademoiselle: good day to you. It is a long time since you have been seen here."

"Yes: but I wish your boat very quick, in order to go to the island."

"It is very unlucky, my good girl; but it is impossible today."

"How so?"

"My boy took the boat to-day, to Saint Ouens, for a boat-race with the rest of them, and there is not a boat left upon the shore for a great distance."

"Confound it!" said Louve, stamping and clinching her fist; "'tis unlucky for me."

"Upon the word of father Ferot, I am very sorry that I cannot take you to the island, for probably he is worse."

"Worse! Who?"

"Martial."

"Martial!" exclaimed Louve, seizing father Ferot by the collar. "Is my man sick?"

"Did you not know it?"

"Martial?"

"To be sure! keep quiet, or you will tear my blouse."

"He is sick, and how long has he been so?"

"For two or three days."

"It cannot be; he would have written to me."

"Oh, indeed! he is too sick to write."

"Too sick to write! And are you sure that he is on the island?"

"I will tell you all that I know: I met the widow Martial this morning—usually, when I see her coming one way I take the other. Do you understand? I take the other, because I am not fond of her company."

"But my man! my man! Where is he?"

"I will tell you; wait a moment! Finding myself face to face with the mother, I dared not avoid speaking to her, for her savage look always frightens me, and I cannot help it. 'I have not seen Martial for two days,' says I: 'Has he gone to the city?' Upon this she looked at me, with eyes that would have killed, if they had been pistols, as the saying is."

"Go on! go on! You make me boil with impatience."

Father Ferot was silent for a moment, and then said: "You are a good girl; promise to keep it secret and I will tell you all that I know about it."

"About my man!"

"Yes: for I tell you that Martial is a good fellow, although somewhat wild and passionate; and if any evil was to happen to him, by means of his villainous old mother, or scoundrel of a brother, it would be too bad."

"But what is the matter? what have his mother and brother done to him? Speak quick—quick, I say!"

"Come, come; let my blouse alone! Let go of me! You interrupt me all the time, and will tear off my clothes into the bargain. I shall never be able to get through my story, and you won't learn anything."

"What patience I need!" said Louve, stamping on the ground with rage.

"Do you agree not to tell anybody what I mention to you?"

"Yes, yes, yes!"

"Upon your word of honor?"

"Father Ferot, you will drive me into fits."

"What a girl! what a girl! What a temper you've got! Well, well; I'll come to the point. In the first place, I must tell you that Martial has been growing upon worse and worse terms with his family; and, that I should not be astonished, if they played him some bad trick, and that is the reason I am sorry that my boat is not here, for if you rely upon those of the island to take you there, you will be mistaken, for neither Nicholas, nor that ugly Calebasse, will take you there."

"I know all that; but what did mother Martial tell you? Was he taken sick upon the island?"

"Do not puzzle me. Here it is; this morning I said to the widow, 'It is two days since I have seen Martial. His boat is fastened up. Has he gone to the city then?' Upon this, the widow looked at me in a savage manner, and said: 'He is sick on the island, and so sick that he cannot live.' I said to myself, 'how can that be? three days ago'—— well, well!"

"Where are you going to?" said father Ferot, interrupting himself. "Where the devil is she running to now?"

With the thought that the life of Martial was in jeopardy, from the hatred of his family, Louve, filled with terror, and transported with rage, could listen no longer to the endless story of the fisherman, but hastened along the banks of the Seine.

Some topographical details may be necessary to a full comprehension of the scene which followed. The island of the Ravageur was nearer to the left bank of the river, than the right, where Fleur de Marie and Madam Seraphin had embarked. Louve had passed over to the left bank. Although the banks of the island were not very high, they were sufficiently so to hide from a spectator upon one shore, the events which were occuring upon the other; so that Louve was unable to see the embarkation of Goualeuse, and the Martial family equally unable to see Louve running along upon the opposite shore.

Let us likewise remind the reader, that the country-house of Doctor Griffon, which was now occupied by the Count de Saint Remy, was half-way up the hill, and near the shore where Louve was now running in great anxiety and distress of mind. She passed, without noticing them, two individuals, who, struck with her strange and wild appearance, turned round to follow her. These two persons were the Count de Saint Remy and Doctor

Griffon. The first impulse of Louve, upon hearing of the danger of her lover, was to hasten with the utmost precipitation to the spot; but, as she approached the island, all the difficulties of reaching it presented themselves. As the fisherman had told her, no boat could be obtained, and she was perfectly convinced that she could expect no assistance from the family of the Martials.

Panting, flushed, and with wild and fiery eyes, she halted opposite to the spot where the island extended its nearest point to the shore. Through the boughs of the leafless willows and poplars, she perceived the roof of the house, beneath which she feared that Martial was dying. Uttering a wild cry at the sight, she threw from her her shawl and cap, and, releasing the hooks of her dress, plunged intrepidly into the river, in her underclothing alone, and pulled for the island, with all the vigor and courage of desperation. What a spectacle of wild and unconquerable energy! As she dashed the ruffled waters with her hands, her thick and long tresses fell round her face, like a dark mane, upon which the beams of the sinking sun played. Had it not been for the ardent gaze with which her eye was fastened upon the goal—had it not been for the anguish stamped upon her visage, it would have seemed that the wild mistress of the poacher was disporting in the waves, in wantonness of spirit, so easily and proudly, like a sea-bird, she pursued her watery course. Her white and muscular arms, upon which she bore the tattooed memento of her lover, clove the waves, which dashed around her, and fell like liquid pearls from her broad shoulders and bare bosom, which glistened like submerged marble. A cry of distress—of terrible agony and despair—now broke from the opposite shore. Louve arrested her wild course, and floated for an instant like a swan upon the water. Sustaining herself with one hand, she threw back with the other her long and drenched hair, and listened with a strained and attent ear. A new cry now reached her, but feeble, suppliant, gasping; and a profound silence succeeded! "Martial!" said Louve, baffling the waves with redoubled energy. In the excitement of the moment, she thought it was the voice of her lover.

The Count and the Doctor whom Louve had passed so hurriedly, could not arrest her deed of rashness. They arrived opposite the island about the moment that the shrieks broke from the opposite shore. They were as much terrified as Louve, and seeing her struggling intrepidly against the waves, exclaimed, "the poor girl will be drowned." Their fears soon vanished. The brave creature swam as if she was a native of the element; a few sinewy strokes brought her to the land; her feet touched the ground, and she had seized one of the stakes which form the embankment at the termination of the island, to raise herself from the water, when the body of a young peasant girl, buoyed up by her clothing, floated near her in the stream. To seize with one hand the stake, and grasp with the other the dress of the female, was the impulsive movement of Louve. She drew, with so much violence, the unfortunate being whom she wished to rescue within range of the stakes, that the body disappeared for an instant beneath the water, although the feet could now rest upon the earth. With extraordinary strength and skill, Louve raised the lifeless form of Goualeuse, whom she had not yet recognized, —lifted her as if she was an infant in her arms, and walking a few steps in the water, deposited her precious burthen upon the grassy banks of the island.

"Courage! courage!" shouted the Count de Saint Remy and the Doctor, who had observed this heroic rescue, "we will pass over the bridge of Asnières and come to your assistance in a boat;" and both of them directed their footsteps toward the bridge.

Their words did not reach the ears of Louve.

We must repeat, that from the right bank of the river where Nicholas, Calebasse and their mother remained, after the perpetration of their horrible crime, it was absolutely impossible to discern the events which were transpiring upon the other bank. As Fleur de Marie had suddenly been drawn within reach of the stakes by Louve, and had even for a moment disappeared beneath the surface, after which she was no more seen by her murderers, they supposed, of course, that the body of their victim had sunk in the waves. A few moments afterward, the stream bore along another corpse, unperceived by Louve. 'Twas the body of the Notary's housekeeper,—dead, hopelessly dead!

Nicholas and his sister were as much interested as Jacques Ferrand himself, in exterminating this witness and accomplice of their crime; and when the valve-boat had sunk with Fleur de Marie, Nicholas, in jumping into the one rowed by his sister, had given it a violent shock, and improved the moment, when Madam Seraphin was attempting to regain her equilibrium, to plunge her into the river, and complete her murder by means of his hook.

Exhausted and breathless, Louve was now kneeling by the side of Fleur de Marie; and, as she was slowly recovering from her effort, she examined the countenance of the being whom she had rescued from inevitable death. Let her surprise be imagined, when she recognized the well-known features of her prison companion, who had exerted such a sudden and important influence upon her destiny. In the excitement of the moment, Louve for an instant forgot Martial. "Goualeuse!" she exclaimed, leaning upon her hands and knees, her hair disordered and drenched, her clothes dripping with water, bending over the face of the unfortunate girl, who was almost expiring upon the turf. Fleur de Marie was pale and motionless: her half-open eye was glazed, as in death; her light and beautiful hair hung close to her temples; her lips were livid; her hand stiff and cold—it seemed as if the spirit had already passed from its lovely tenement.

"Goualeuse," repeated Louve, "what a singular accident! how much good and how much pain she has caused me by her words and promises, and I was now going to tell Martial, the resolution which she had induced me to take. Poor little child! I find her dead! but no, no!" continued Louve, drawing nearer to Fleur de Marie, and perceiving the feeble breath which was escaping from her mouth; "Good God! she is not dead! she breathes still, and I have rescued her. I never before saved any one from death; how happy I feel; it even warms my heart. But my man! my man! I must save him also: perhaps he is dying this moment, for his mother and brother are capable of murdering him. Yet I cannot leave this poor little innocent. I will take her to the widow's house; I will compel her to aid this poor creature, and to show me Martial, or else I will tear everything to pieces. I will slaughter every one! What care I for brother, mother, and sister, when I know my man is there?"

And rising suddenly, Louve bore Fleur de Marie in her arms. With her light burden, she hastened to the house, confident that the widow and her daughter, in spite of their wickedness, could not withhold their assistance from Fleur de Marie. When she reached that part of the island from which both banks of the Seine could be discerned, Nicholas, his mother, and Calebasse, had departed on their way to the tavern of Bras-rouge. About the same moment also, a man who was concealed among the plaster-kilns, and who had observed from that ambuscade this horrible scene, disappeared also; thinking, like the murderers, that his fatal design had been fully accomplished. That man was Jacques Ferrand.

One of the boats of Nicholas was still floating in the river, fastened to a stake. Hardly had the notary left the plaster-kiln, when the Count de Saint Remy and Doctor Griffon, crossed in haste the bridge of Asnières, expecting to pass over to the island in the boat of Nicholas, which they had seen from a distance.

Louve, to her great surprise when she reached the house of the Ravageur, found the door locked. Depositing Fleur de Marie, who was still senseless, beneath the arbor, she approached the house. She knew the window of Martial's room, and was astonished to see the shutters lined with sheet-iron, and fastened with bars of the same metal. Suspecting a portion of the truth, Louve uttered a wild, loud shriek, and commenced shouting "Martial," with all the strength of her lungs. She heard no reply. Frightened at the silence, she raved round the house like a beast of prey, who scents but cannot find the entrance to the den where its mate is caged. Now and then she would shout "Martial, are you there?" and in her fury she shook the bars of the kitchen window, and knocked against the shutters, and kicked against the door.

Upon a sudden, a deep voice answered her from the interior of the house. Louve shuddered, and listened; "My man has heard me," she said, "and I must enter, if I am compelled to gnaw the door with my teeth;" and she again uttered her wild yell.

Several feeble knocks against the inside of Martial's window, responded to her cries.

"He is there!" she exclaimed, halting suddenly beneath the window of her lover. "If it is necessary, I will tear away the iron with my nails, but I will open the window."

With these words, she perceived a long ladder, partly suspended to one of the shutters of the lower room, and, pulling with violence upon the shutter, the key fell down, which was concealed behind it.

"If it is the key," said Louve, thrusting it into the lock, "I can go up to his room. It is the key!" she cried. "Martial is saved!"

When she entered the kitchen, she was struck by the cries of the two children, who, upon hearing an unusual noise, called for help. The widow, not having any reason to apprehend any visit to the island during her absence, had been satisfied with locking in François and Amandine, without removing the key from the

door. Released by Louve, the two children rushed, in precipitation, from the cellar.

"Oh! Louve, save our brother Martial!" exclaimed François. "They nailed him into his room two days since, and wish to starve him to death."

"Have they wounded him?"

"I believe not."

"Then I have arrived in time," said Louve, hastening to the staircase; but she halted after ascending a few steps.

"And I had almost forgotten Gonaleuse!" she exclaimed. "Amandine, make some fire immediately; and do you and your brother bring near it a poor girl, who is under the arbor, that I have just rescued from drowning. François, a spike, an axe, and a crowbar, that I may break down the door immediately."

"Here is the hammer with which we split wood; but it is too heavy for you!" exclaimed the boy, dragging with difficulty an enormous hammer.

"Too heavy!" exclaimed Louve, and she raised it with ease. Then, hastening up stairs, four steps at a time, she said to the children, "Run after the young girl and place her near the fire."

Quick as lightning, Louve reached the door of Martial, at the end of the hall.

"Courage! courage, my man! here is your Louve!" she exclaimed, raising the hammer with both of her hands, and bestowing a strong blow which shook the door.

"It is nailed from without," said Martial, in a feeble voice; "pull out the nails."

Kneeling down in the passage—with the back of the hammer, with her own nails, which she tore to pieces, and her fingers, which she cut, Louve succeeded in pulling from the floor and door-frame, several long spikes. The door finally gave way; and Martial, pale, with his hands wounded and bleeding, fell, almost lifeless, into the arms of Louve.

CHAPTER V..... LOUVE AND MARTIAL.

"At last I see you! I embrace you! I hold you in my arms!" said Louve, with an accent of wild and passionate joy. Then, supporting—almost carrying him, she assisted him to a seat on the bench which stood in the passage. For a few moments, Martial remained faint and feeble, scarcely able to recover from the sudden shock, which had almost exhausted his remaining strength.

Louve had saved her lover, as he was about to surrender his life in despair—less from the want of food, than from the exhaustion of the atmosphere in a small room, without any fireplace, and almost hermetically sealed; for Calebasse had taken the devilish precaution to stop the least crack in the door and windows, by means of which air might penetrate, with cotton and rags.

With a heart palpitating with anguish and delight, and with eyes filled with tears, Louve, upon her knees before him, watched each motion of Martial's countenance. His senses were gradually restored, as his lungs inhaled a purer atmosphere; and after a few convulsive heavings of his chest, he raised slowly his downcast head, sighed deeply, and opened his eyes.

"Martial, it is I, your Louve; how do you feel?"

"Better," he replied, with a feeble voice.

"Good heaven! What shall I bring you? water? vinegar?"

"No, no!" said Martial, less oppressed; "air, air! nothing more."

Louve, at the risk of tearing her hand, smashed three or four panes from a window, which could not have been opened without removing a table.

"I breathe now, I breathe! my head is less oppressed," said Martial, recovering; and as if he had not been conscious until this moment of the service which his mistress had rendered him, he exclaimed:

"Without your aid, I should have died, my brave Louve."

"How do you feel now?"

"Better and better."

"Are you not hungry?"

"No; I am too weak. What I suffered most from, was the want of air: I was about smothering. Oh! it was awful—awful!"

"And now?"

"I am restored from my grave, and I have to thank you."

"But your hands—your hands! these deep cuts! What have they done to you?"

"Nicholas and Calebasse, not daring to attack me in my face a second time, nailed me into this room, that I might starve to death; and while I was attempting to prevent them from nailing up the shutters, my sister cut my hands with the hatchet."

"The monsters! they wished to make it believed that you had died from sickness. Your mother has already spread the report that you were desperately unwell: your mother! Martial—your mother!"

"Do not mention her!" said he, with bitterness; and then observing, for the first time, Louve's want of clothing, and her dishevelled appearance, he exclaimed, "What has happened to you? your hair is dripping with water. You have scarcely any clothes upon you, and those are wet."

"Never mind, never mind: you are saved."

"But explain to me, why you are so wet."

"I knew that you were in danger; I could find no boat, and ——"

"You swam across!"

"But your hands are wounded—the monsters! You have suffered, and I was not present!"

"My brave Louve!" exclaimed Martial, with enthusiasm: "the bravest of all brave creatures!"

Did you not write upon this arm, "Death to Cowards?" and Louve displayed the indelible memento upon her arm.

"You are a perfect heroine, but you shiver with the cold. You are trembling."

"It is not with cold."

"Never mind,—go into Calebasse's room, you will find there her cloak, and you must wrap yourself in it."

"But——"

"I insist upon it."

Within a second, Louve was wrapped in a tartan cloak, and she returned.

"To risk drowning for my sake!" said Martial, surveying his mistress with enthusiasm.

"I have saved a young girl from drowning, on the contrary."

"You saved a young girl? where is she?"

"Down stairs with the children: they are taking care of her."

"And who is the young girl?"

"If you but knew what a chance—what a fortunate chance it has been! She is one of my companions at Saint Lazare—very extraordinary girl, I assure you."

"How so?"

"Imagine a being that I both loved and hated at the same time, for she placed both happiness and misery in my heart."

"She?"

"Yes, and in relation to you."

"In relation to me?"

"Hear me, Martial:"—then interrupting herself, Louve added, "No, no! I dare not speak it."

"What can it be?"

"I wished to make of you a request, and I started to see you for that express object; for, when I left Paris, I did not know that you were in danger."

"Speak it, then."

"I dare not."

"You dare not, after what you have done for me!"

"Precisely; for I should seem to be begging for a reward."

"Begging for reward! As if I was not already indebted to you! Did you not nurse me during my sickness last year?"

"Are you not my man?"

"Therefore you should speak frankly to me, because I am, and always shall be, your man."

"Always, Martial?"

"Always! true as my name is Martial. There never will be another woman in all the world to me, but you, Louve. Do you hear that? I care not what you are, or have been; I love you; you love me—and I am indebted to you for my life; but since you have been in prison, I am no longer the same man. There has been a great change in me. I have reflected upon it, and am determined that you shall no longer be what you now are."

"What do you mean?"

"I do not wish to leave you. I do not wish to leave François and Amandine."

"Your little brother and sister!"

"Yes; from this day forth I am determined to be to them as a father; and that, you understand, will impose upon me new duties. It will affect my conduct. I shall be obliged to support them. Nicholas and mother are determined to make perfect brigands of them, and I must remove them from this island."

"To where?"

"I do not know; but I shall take them far from Paris."

"And I!"

"I shall take you, also."

"Take me with you?" exclaimed Louve, in joyful surprise. "I cannot realize the happiness of being never separated from you."

"You shall never be separated, my brave Louve; you will assist me to bring up the children; I know you well, and when I tell you that I wish my little Amandine shall grow up an honest girl, you will speak to her accordingly; I know that you will be to her a good mother."

"Thank you, Martial, thank you."

"We will work like honest laborers; give yourself no uneasiness, we shall find employment, and we will work like slaves, that at least these children may not turn out scoundrels like their father and the rest of the family. I shall not hear myself called again the son and brother of guillotined men; in short, I will no longer pass the streets where you are known —— but what ails you?"

"Martial, I am afraid that I shall run wild with joy."

"Wild?"

"Yes, it is too great happiness for me."

"What?"

"That which you ask of me; it must have been the rescue of Goualeuse which has brought this good fortune to me."

"But what ails you?"

"It is the request which you have made of me."

"What?"

"I was coming to ask it of you."

"What! to leave Paris?"

"Yes," she replied, with precipitation; "yes, to leave Paris, that I might live with you in the woods, to have there a neat and comfortable house, children also, whom I could love, as Louve would love offspring of yours; and if you wished me to call you," said the poor outcast, trembling, "my husband instead of my man, for we could not obtain the situation without that."

Martial, in his turn, surveyed Louve with astonishment, not comprehending to what she alluded.

"What situation do you mean?"

"The situation of game-keeper."

"Which I should have?"

"Yes."

"And who would give it to me?"

"The protector of the young girl whom I have saved."

"They do not know me."

"But I have spoken to her about you, and she will recommend you to her protectors."

"And why did you speak to her about me?"

"Of what should I speak?"

"Good Louve!"

"And you must know that in prison we have our confidences; and this young girl was so sweet and gentle, that, in spite of myself, I was drawn toward her, and I immediately suspected that she was not one of us."

"Who is she, then?"

"I do not know; I cannot understand; but my eyes never saw, and my ears never heard, a being like her. She is like a fairy; she reads what is passing in the heart. When I told her how much I loved you, it inspired her with the greatest interest for me. She did not speak harsh words to me; but she spoke of a rude and laborious life, yet tranquilly passed in following pursuits according to your taste, in the woods, only, according to her idea, instead of being a poacher, you would be a game-keeper; instead of being your mistress, I should be your wife, with fine children, who ran to meet you as you returned from the woods at night, with your gun on your shoulder, and your dog at your heels; after which we could take our supper at the door of our cottage, beneath the tall trees, in the cool of the evening. What shall I say? In spite of myself I listened to her: it was like a spell, for she speaks so beautifully, that everything she described I saw before me. I thought I saw it, for I was dreaming, though wide awake."

"Oh, yes! it is indeed a glorious life," said Martial, sighing in his turn. "Without being entirely wicked at heart, poor François has been so much with Calcdrasse and Nicholas, that the air of the woods will be better for him than the city air. Amandine could help you in the house, and I could make as good a game-keeper as anybody in the world, for I have been a famous poacher. You would be my housekeeper, my brave Louve, and with some little ones, whose merry shouts would ring around us, we should need nothing in the world. When we once became accustomed to a forest life, we should be at home there, and if we lived there for a hundred years, it would pass like one day. But I am a fool: you should not have spoken to me of this glorious life in the woods; it only inspires me with regrets."

"I have allowed you to speak, because you have said the same things that I expressed to Goualeuse."

"How!"

"When she repeated to me those fairy tales, I said to her, How unfortunate it is, Goualeuse, that these castles in the air, as you call them, have no foundation!' Do you know what she replied?" asked Louve, with a countenance radiant with joy.

"No."

"'Let Martial marry you, and, if you will both promise to live honestly, I will obtain the situation of game-keeper for him, when I leave the prison,' she replied."

"For me? for me?" the situation of game-keeper?

"Yes, yes; for you."

"You are right, Louve; it is only a dream. If it was only necessary to marry you to obtain the place, I would do it to-morrow, if I had the means of supporting you; for, from this day forth, you are virtually my wife, my real wife."

"Your real wife, Martial?"

"My only wife; and I desire that you will hereafter call me your husband, in the same manner as if the ceremony was actually performed."

"Oh! Goualeuse was right! there is a pleasure in speaking of 'Martial, my husband.' You shall see Louve managing your household; you shall see her at work."

"But the situation, the situation? do you believe it?"

"If poor little Goualeuse was mistaken, it will be the fault of others; for no one could look at her face while she was speaking, and doubt that she was convinced of the truth of it herself. Besides, when I left the prison, the matron told me that the protectors of Goualeuse were people of great wealth, and the fact that they removed her from prison to-day, proves that they are able to keep their promises."

"What can we be thinking about, Louve?" exclaimed Martial, rising suddenly.

"What do you mean?"

"Why, the poor unfortunate girl may be dying, down stairs, and we are prating here about our own affairs, instead of relieving her."

"Do not be disturbed; François and Amandine are with her; they would have called us, had there been any danger. But you are right; let us go down and see her—her to whom we are indebted for so much happiness!"

Martial, leaning upon the arm of Louve, now descended with her to the kitchen.

Before introducing them, we will inform the reader of the events which had transpired since Fleur de Marie had been committed to the care of the children.

CHAPTER VI. ..... DOCTOR GRIFFON.

François and Amandine had conveyed Fleur de Marie to the fire in the kitchen, when the Count de Saint Remy and Doctor Griffon, who had landed upon the island by means of the boat which Nicholas had left upon the opposite shore, entered the house. While the children kindled a blazing fire by throwing on dry faggots of poplar, Doctor Griffon devoted his professional skill to the restoration of the young girl.

"The poor child is hardly seventeen," said the Count, deeply moved; and addressing the Doctor, asked "what do you think of her case, my friend?"

"Her pulsations are scarcely perceptible; but what is extraordinary in this case, is, that the face of the subject is not colored blue, as in ordinary cases of asphyxia from submersion,' responded the Doctor, with imperturbable coolness, and looking at Fleur de Marie with a profoundly meditative air.

Doctor Griffon was a tall, thin man, with a pale visage, and entirely bald, with the exception of two black locks, which were carefully brushed over his temples from the back part of his head. Severe study had traced its lines upon his face and brow, and his expression was stern and intellectual. He was distinguished for his learning, skill, and success, as a practitioner, was principal physician of a civic hospital, where we shall subsequently meet him; and with all these elements of excellence, had but one fault, if we can call it by that name: it was to make of his patients a complete scientific study; to become so completely absorbed in the nature of the disease, whether of the young or the old, the rich or the poor—it made no difference with him—as to think only of the medical facts more or less curious, which the disorder might develop for the benefit of medical science. In his view, every patient was a *subject*.

"What a charming face! what a beautiful being! in spite of her alarming pallor," said the Count de Saint Remy, contemplating Fleur de Marie with a melancholy expression. "Did you ever see a more mild and innocent expression of countenance, my dear Doctor? and do you also observe that she is young, extremely young?"

"Her age has very little to do with the case," said the doctor, roughly; "no more than the presence of water in the lungs,

which was formerly regarded as mortal. It was a humbug, which the wonderful experiments of the famous Goodwin completely refuted."

"But, Doctor——"

"It is a fact, I assure you," said the physician, absorbed in his art. "To discover if the presence of a foreign liquid in the lungs was fatal, Goodwin plunged dogs and cats, for several seconds, in buckets of ink, took them out alive, and dissected them a few moments afterward. He became convinced by the dissection, that the ink had penetrated into the lungs, and thus demonstrated that the presence of a liquid in the organs of respiration will not cause death."

The Count knew that the physician was an excellent man at heart, and that it was only his scientific infatuation which gave him the appearance of harshness or indifference to suffering.

"But have you not some hope for the poor girl?"

"The extremities of the subject are very cold," said the physician; "but feeble hope of her recovery remains."

"But to die so young, poor child; what a melancholy thought!"

"Eye-balls fixed and glassy," continued the doctor, coolly raising with his finger the lifeless eyelid of Fleur de Marie.

"Strange man!" exclaimed the Count, almost indignantly, "and yet I have known you watch for entire nights by my side, and if I had been your brother, you could not have shown me more devotion."

The doctor, while engaged in his examination of Fleur de Marie, replied, with undisturbed phlegm:

"Do you think that we are presented every day with an ataxic fever, so wonderfully complicated and so interesting to study, as the one with which you were attacked, my friend? It was admirable! admirable! stupor, delirium, twitchings of the sinews, syncopes, all contributed to diversify its constantly varied symptoms; it was a regular *dead* fever, a very rare case, I assure you. Besides, your constitution was a singular one, which added to the interest which I felt in contemplating the action of the fever upon it. You have always suffered from some singular and anomalous derangement of the nervous action; call it temporary paralysis, if you please. In that point of view alone, your sickness had every claim upon my attention. You presented me with a chance for study which does not occur once in a hundred years; and to speak to you frankly, my friend, all that I desire in the world is, to meet with another specimen of that magnificent fever. But such a godsend could hardly be expected twice."

The Count shrugged his shoulders, as if to indicate that he had no disposition to gratify the curiosity of the doctor again, in his own person.

It was at this moment that Martial descended the stairs, leaning upon the arm of Louve, who had thrown over her drenched garments, as we have mentioned, the cloak of Calebasse.

Struck with the paleness of the appearance of Louve's lover, and seeing also the dried blood upon his hands, the Count exclaimed:

"Who is this?"

"My husband," replied Louve, looking toward Martial, with an expression of happiness and gratified pride, which it is impossible to portray.

"You have an excellent and heroic wife, sir," said the Count to him; "I saw her rescue this unfortunate girl, with the most singular and praiseworthy courage."

"Oh, yes, sir! she is an excellent and brave wife!" replied Martial, emphasizing the last word, and looking in his turn toward Louve, with an enthusiastic and passionate gaze. "Yes, sir: she is a perfect heroine, for she has just saved my life, also."

"Your life!" said the Count, surprised.

"Just look at his hands, sir," said Louve, wiping away the tears which softened the savage brilliancy of her eyes.

"It is horrible!" exclaimed the Count; "the poor man's hands are cut to pieces; look, doctor."

The physician, turning his head slightly, looked over his shoulder at the numerous wounds, inflicted by the hatchet of Calebasse, and said to Martial:

"Open and close your hand."

Martial executed the motion with considerable difficulty.

The doctor shrugged his shoulders, and returning his attention to Fleur de Marie, said, in a disdainful tone, in which a perceptible accent of regret mingled:

"Pshaw! there is nothing serious in the wounds; no severance of the tendons; the subject will be able to use his hands in a week."

"Is it true, sir, that my husband will not be maimed?" exclaimed Louve, with a voice of gratitude.

The doctor gave a negative shake of his head.

"And Goualeuse, sir? she will live, will she not?" asked Louve; "she must live. My husband and myself are greatly indebted to her;" and turning to Martial, she added: "here is the poor girl of whom I spoke to you; she it is, who may be the cause of our prosperity; she gave to me the idea of coming to you, and placed in my mind all that I have told you. What a happy Providence it was which permitted me to save her."

"She is our guardian angel," said Martial, impressed with the beauty of Goualeuse. "What a heavenly countenance! she will live, will she not, doctor?"

"I do not know," said the doctor; "but in the first place, can she remain here, and receive the necessary attention?"

"Here!" exclaimed Louve; "they murder people here!"

"Hush! hush!" said Martial.

Both the Count and the doctor looked at Louve with surprise.

"This house has a bad reputation in the neighborhood; and it would not surprise me if what the girl has said is true," said the physician, in a low tone to the Count de Saint Remy.

"You have then been the victim of violence?" said the Count to Martial. "Who inflicted upon you those wounds?"

"It is nothing, sir. I had a dispute here, and a fight ensued, and I was wounded. But this young peasant girl cannot remain here," he added, in a gloomy voice; "neither I nor my wife will remain here, nor my brother and sister, whom you behold; we are all about to leave this island, never to return to it."

"How happy we shall be!" exclaimed the two children in chorus.

"What then shall we do?" said the doctor, looking at Fleur de Marie; "it is impossible to think of transporting the subject to Paris in her present prostrate state. My house is near here; my gardener's wife and daughter are excellent nurses; and since this case of asphyxia from submersion interests you, my dear Count, you can overlook her attendants, and I will call and see her every day."

"How can you affect the stoic, when you are generous enough to make such a proposition?"

"Why, if the subject dies, which is more than probable, there will be an opportunity for a post-mortem examination, which will confirm once more the theory of Goodwin."

"The idea is a frightful one," said the Count.

"For him who knows how to read it, the human body is a book, from which one may learn to save the lives of thousands," said the doctor, stoically.

"In fine, you are benevolent," said the Count. "What matters the cause, so long as the effect exists? Poor child! the more I look upon her, the more am I interested in her welfare."

"And she deserves it!" said Louve, with enthusiasm, drawing near.

"Do you know her?" asked the Count.

"It is to her, sir, that I shall be indebted for my future life—in saving her from death, I have returned the favor which she has conferred upon me."

"And who is she?" asked the Count.

"An angel, sir! the best creature in the world. And although she is dressed as a peasant girl, there is not a lady in the land who can speak as beautifully as she can, with her sweet musical voice; she is a noble girl, I assure you; courageous and kind."

"By what accident did she fall into the river?"

"I know not, sir."

"She is not a peasant girl, then?" asked the Count.

"A peasant girl! just look at those small, white hands."

"It is true," said the Count; "what a strange mystery! But what is her name? her family?"

"Come," said the doctor, interrupting the conversation, "we must convey the subject to the boat."

Within half an hour, Fleur de Marie, who had not yet recovered her senses, was carried to the house of the physician, placed in an excellent bed, and was watched with maternal care by the wife of the gardener of Mr. Griffon, assisted by Louve.

The doctor promised the Count de Saint Remy, whose interest for the girl increased, to call the very same evening to see her.

Martial started for Paris, with François and Amandine. Louve was unwilling to leave Fleur de Marie until she was out of danger.

The island of the Ravageur was left deserted. We shall soon meet with the infernal beings who dwelt upon it, at the cabaret of Bras-rouge, where they were to aid Chouette in the murder of the brokeress in diamonds. In the meantime we will convey the reader to an interview which Tom and Sarah had appointed with that ferocious hag, the accomplice of the Schoolmaster's crimes.

CHAPTER VII. ..... THE PORTRAIT.

"——— half serpent and half cat."
WOLFRANG, i. 2.

THOMAS SEYTON, the brother of the Countess Sarah McGregor, was impatiently promenading upon the boulevard of the Observatory, when he saw Chouette approaching. The infamous wretch wore a white cap, and was enveloped in a red tartan shawl, and the point of a small stiletto was seen at the bottom of the basket she carried upon her arm, through which it had penetrated. The murderous weapon was the property of the Schoolmaster. Thomas Seyton did not perceive that Chouette was armed.

"Three o'clock is striking from the Luxembourg; I am punctual I hope."

"Come on," said the brother of the Countess.

Walking before her, he first crossed some unoccupied lots, and then entered a deserted lane, in the neighborhood of the rue Cassini, and halted near the centre of the passage, which was closed by a gate. Making a sign to Chouette to follow him, he proceeded a few steps in an avenue filled with evergreens, and saying to her, "Wait for me here," disappeared.

"I hope he won't make me wait long," said Chouette; "I must return to Bras-rouge's at five, to meet Martial and doctor the brokeress. Where is my stiletto, by the way? Oh! here the villain is, looking out of the window!" added the hag; "the reason is, I did not put his cap on;" and she drew the weapon from the basket and concealed it completely. "'Twas Fourline's tool—and did he not ask it of me, pretending that he wished to kill the rats that troubled him in his cave? No, indeed! poor little animals, they have no amusement or society but his, and as he is but a surly old blind man, they deserve to have a nibble or two at him, and I will not allow him to harm the dear little playthings. I will keep the dagger. Besides, who knows but I may have occasion for administering it to the brokeress? Thirty thousand francs of diamonds!—there will be enough to share among us all. It will be a better spec than I made out of the notary, whom I supposed I could force to shell out his coppers. I threatened to him denounce that it was his servant who sent Goualeuse to me by the hands of Tournemine; but he is not frightened so easily: he called me a liar and turned me out of doors. Good, good! I will pay him! An anonymous letter shall be sent to the people on the farm, informing them that it was the notary who abandoned her; and, as they probably know her parents, it will be hot work for Jacques Ferrand, when she is discharged from Saint Lazare. But hold; some one comes. 'Tis the small pale lady who accompanied the tall man in black to the *tapis-franc* of the ogress, and whom Fourline and myself afterward robbed among the ruins near Notre Dame," added Chouette, as she saw Sarah approaching from the extremity of the alley. "There is some new job to be got up. It must be for this little lady that we took Goualeuse from the farm. If she is disposed to shell over handsomely for some new job, I am the woman to do it."

In approaching Chouette, whom she had not seen since her interview with her at the *tapis-franc*, the Countess evinced all the contempt and repugnance usual with people of her rank, when they are obliged to come in contact with the wretches whom they wish to make the tools of their crimes. Thomas Seyton, who had thus far actively cooperated with his sister, in all her machinations, although he believed that they would eventuate in no advantage, had refused to play any longer his contemptible part, and had been induced, with a great deal of reluctance, to promote this interview of Chouette with his sister, determining, however, not to be involved in any new stratagem which they might devise. Having been unsuccessful in winning back Rodolphe to his allegiance, by severing all the ties of affection which were dear to him, the Countess expected to make him the victim of a base deception, by means of which she might realize her visionary hopes. Her intention was to make Rodolphe believe that his daughter was not dead, by affirming that some orphan-girl, whom she could secure, was actually his child. The reader is aware that Jacques Ferrand had obstinately refused to participate in the plot, and had determined to rescue himself from all danger, by the death of Fleur de Marie, fearing the disclosures of Chouette no less than the threats of the Countess. But Sarah had not abandoned her design, with the full confidence that she could intimidate the notary, when a suitable girl could be obtained to play the part assigned to her.

After a moment's pause, Sarah said to Chouette:

"Are you skillful, discreet, and resolute?"

"Skillful as a monkey, resolute as a bull-dog, silent as a perch. Just as the devil made her, so is Chouette: ready to serve you, if it is in her power; and that she has power, the young country girl who has been shut up in Saint Lazare for two months, proves."

"I am not thinking concerning her, but of something else."

"Just as you please, my little lady. Provided that there is money at the end of what you propose, we shall be united like these two fingers."

Sarah could scarcely restrain an expression of disgust. "You know, I suppose, people among the lower classes—unfortunate people?"

"There are more of those than of millionaires: a large assortment, from which we can choose. Thank God! there is much rich misery in Paris."

"You must find for me an orphan that is poor, and one especially that lost her parents in early life. She must have an agreeable face, a mild disposition, and not over seventeen years of age."

Chouette looked upon the Countess with surprise.

"Such an orphan cannot be difficult to find: there are a great many foundlings."

"Look here, my little lady; have you not forgotten Goualeuse, who is just the creature you want?"

"And who is Goualeuse?"

"The young girl we caught at Bouqueval."

"It does not concern her, I tell you."

"But hear me, and reward me for my good advice. You want an orphan, gentle as a lamb, beautiful as the day, not more than seventeen years old: is it not so?"

"Yes."

"Well, take Goualeuse, when she leaves Saint Lazare. You are in as good luck, as if she was made up expressly for you. That rascally Jacques Ferrand gave her to me when she was six years of age, in order to get rid of her. Tournemine, who is now in the bagnio, brought her to me, saying that she was a child that they wished to dispose of, and pretend that she was dead?"

"Jacques Ferrand, do you say?" exclaimed Sarah, in a voice that was so penetrating that it startled even Chouette. "The notary, Jacques Ferrand, gave that child to you, and——"

She could not finish the sentence; her emotion overpowered her; she stretched her arms convulsively toward Chouette; surprise and joy were depicted upon her countenance.

"I can't conceive what kindles you up in this manner, my little lady. The story is simple enough. Ten years ago, Tournemine asked me if I would take charge of a little girl, whom they wished to get rid of. 'Whether she lives or dies, it is all the same thing. You can make a thousand francs by the bargain, and do with the child whatever you please.'"

"Ten years ago!" exclaimed Sarah.

"Ten years."

"A little blonde?"

"Yes; a little blonde."

"With blue eyes?"

"With eyes as blue as blue-bells."

"And is it the same girl you brought from the farm?"

"Yes. We packed her up for Saint Lazare; but I must say, that I did not expect to find in that country girl my little Pegriotte."

"Gracious God!" exclaimed Sarah, falling upon her knees, and raising her hands and eyes to heaven; "thy designs are impenetrable: I prostrate myself before thy Providence. Can such happiness await me! No, no! it is impossible!" Suddenly rising from her knees, she said to Chouette, who looked upon her with a face of stupefied wonder: "Come, come;" and she walked before the hag with precipitate steps.

At the end of the alley, they entered the glass door of a cabinet which was sumptuously furnished. As Chouette was about to enter, the Countess made her a signal to remain behind, and rang a bell with violence. A servant appeared. "I am at home to no one, and let nobody approach this place: do you hear?—nobody!"

The servant departed. Chouette heard the instructions of the Countess to the servant, and saw her draw the bolt. Sarah, turning round toward her, said: "Come in quickly, and shut the door."

Opening a secretary in haste, Sarah drew from it an ebony casket, which she placed upon a writing desk in the middle of the room, and made a signal to Chouette to approach. The casket contained several cases, which seemed to be devoted to the jewelry of the Countess; and she was in such haste to reach the bottom of it, that she scattered round the table boxes which were filled with splendid necklaces and bracelets of diamonds, emeralds, and rubies of the largest size and the first water.

The eyes of Chouette were dazzled.

She was armed, alone, shut up with the Countess, and flight was easy and secure; an infernal idea passed through the brain of the infamous hag. To accomplish this new crime, it was necessary to draw her stiletto from her basket, and approach Sarah without exciting her suspicion. With the adroitness of the tiger, that creeps stealthily toward its prey, the hag took advantage of the preoccupation of Sarah's mind, to steal around the table which separated her from her victim. Chouette had already commenced her perfidious movement, when she was obliged to halt suddenly, for Sarah drew a portrait from beneath the false bottom of the casket, presented it to the old woman with a trembling hand, and said: "Look at that portrait."

"It is Pegriotte, herself!" exclaimed the hag, struck with the resemblance; "that is the same little girl that was brought to me. I see her before me as clearly as when Tournemine delivered her to me; the same long curly hair, which I immediately cut off and sold to great advantage, upon my word."

"Do you certainly recognize her? Are you sure it is the same? Oh! I beg of you, do not deceive me."

"I tell you, my lady, it is Pegriotte, just as I saw her," said Chouette, attempting to approach nearer without exciting suspicion; "she resembles that portrait, even to this day; if you saw her, you would be struck with the likeness."

Sarah uttered a cry of pain upon learning that her little daughter had lived for ten years in abandoned misery. Not one pang of remorse, however, penetrated to her heart, for having been the instrument of removing her from the peaceful retreat where Rodolphe had placed her. The unnatural mother sought from Chouette, no disclosure of the degraded life to which her forsaken daughter had been exposed; ambition had long since annihilated every maternal impulse in her bosom. It was not joy at the discovery of her long-lost child which transported her with rapture; it was the hope of realizing by her instrumentality the ambitious dream of her life. Rodolphe, without knowing anything about the child, but her misfortunes and her misery, had extended to her all the protecting care of the tenderest charity; what overflowing floods of affection would have gushed from his heart, had the vaguest suspicion flashed upon his mind that she was his own daughter!

He was now single; the Countess was also a widow; the long sought crown now danced in her eye.

Chouette, stealthily drawing nearer and nearer the Countess, had now reached the table; the handle of the stiletto was ready for her grasp; she was but a step from the Countess.

"Do you know how to write?" said Sarah to her, suddenly; and pushing aside the casket and the jewels, she opened a portfolio.

"No, madam, I cannot write," responded Chouette.

"I will, then, write from your dictation; inform me of all the circumstances of this young girl's abandonment;" and Sarah, seating herself in a fauteueil before the writing-table, made a signal to Chouette to draw near.

The eye of the old hag blazed like fire. At last she was standing by Sarah's side, who leaned over the table to write.

"I will read aloud as I write," said the Countess, "and do you correct me if I am wrong."

"Yes, madam," said Chouette, eyeing every motion, and placing her right hand in the basket to seize her stiletto.

"I declare that——;" but interrupting herself, and turning to Chouette, whose hand already grasped the weapon; the Countess asked, "At what time was the young girl committed to your charge?"

"In the month of February, 1827."

"And by whom?" asked Sarah, still turned toward Chouette.

"By Pierre Tournemine, now in the galleys at Rochefort, to whom the young girl was surrendered by Madam Seraphin, the housekeeper of the notary, Jacques Ferrand."

The Countess resumed her writing, and read in a loud voice: "I declare that in the month of February, 1827, a man named ——"

Sarah now turned again toward the hag, who was already raising the weapon to slay her victim, and was obliged to place the armed hand upon the back of the fautueil to hide her murderous intent. Leaning toward the Countess, she seemed prepared to answer the expected question.

"I have forgot the name of the man who intrusted you with the child.

"Pierre Tournemine," replied Chouette.

"Pierre Tournemine," repeated the Countess, returning to her occupation, "now in the galleys of Rochefort, placed in my hands a child who had been confided to her by the housekeeper of——"

The sentence was left unfinished, for Chouette, having dropped her basket to her feet, threw herself upon the Countess with the violence of a fury. Seizing her by the back of the neck with her left hand, and forcing her face to the table, she drove the stiletto with her right, between the shoulders of the unfortunate lady. The horrid deed was perpetrated with so much rapidity, that the Countess did not utter a groan; she remained seated in the chair, with her face bent to the table: the pen fell from her hand.

"That same blow Fourline gave to the little old man of the rue Roule—the account of one more who will tell no tales, is now settled," said the hag; and gathering up the precious stones, she threw them into the basket, and did not perceive that her victim still breathed.

The murder and the pleasantry being completed, the old fiend opened the glass door, and hurried rapidly through the avenue of evergreens, and soon reached the vacant lots. Near the observatory she entered a hack, which conveyed her to the tavern of Bras-rouge, on the Champs Elysees. She expected to meet at this den the widow Martial, Nicholas, Calebasse and Barbillon, to rob and murder the brokeress of diamonds.

CHAPTER VIII..... THE POLICE OFFICER.

The reader is already acquainted with the Cœur-Saignant, situated on the Champs Elysees, near Cours la Reine, and in one of those vast ditches which abounded in the neighborhood of that promenade a few years since. The denizens of the island of the Ravageur had not yet arrived. Since the departure of Bradamanti, who had accompanied the stepmother of the Marchioness d'Harville to Normandy, Tortillard had returned to his father's house. Placed as a sentinel at the top of the staircase, the deformed cripple was to announce the arrival of the Martials, as Bras-rouge was at that time engaged in a private conference with a police-officer, called Narcisse Borel, whom the reader, perhaps, remembers when he appeared there for the purpose of arresting two villains, suspected of murder. The officer was a man of about forty years of age, with a stout and vigorous frame; a florid complexion; and completely shaved, in order to assume the various disguises which his profession rendered necessary; for he had to unite the dexterity of a comedian to the courage of a soldier, to succeed in arresting certain bandits against whom he had to struggle with equal cunning and determination. Narcisse Borel was, in short, one of the most useful and efficient instruments of the public authorities.

Let us join the private conference of the officer and Bras-rouge, which had already become somewhat animated.

"Yes," said Borel; "you are accused of taking a double advantage of your position: of participating in the thefts of a very dangerous set of malefactors, and of giving false information respecting them to the authorities. Beware, Bras-rouge! if it is discovered, but little mercy will be shown you."

"Alas! I know that I am accused, and nothing is more distressing to me, my dear Narcisse," replied Bras-rouge, giving to his cat-like vision an expression of hypocritical sorrow. "But I hope that to-day, at least, justice will be done me; that I shall be raised above the malice of my enemies; and that my sincerity will be universally acknowledged."

"We shall see! we shall see!"

"How can people mistrust me? Have I not been sufficiently tried? Have I not placed you on the tracks of the most flagrant criminals? Did I not secure the arrest of Ambrose Martial, one of the most dangerous malefactors of Paris? For, as it is said, 'he was a chip of the old block.' And the race of Martials came from hell, whither, I doubt not, it will return, if God is just."

"All this is very good! very excellent! But Ambrose was informed that he was about to be arrested; and if I had not anticipated the hour which you appointed, he would have escaped us."

"Do you believe me capable, Mr. Narcisse, of informing him of your approach?"

"What I know, is, that I received a ball when I closed with the brigand, which, very luckily, only passed through my arm."

"People in your profession, are frequently exposed to such mistakes."

"Do you call that a mistake?"

"Certainly; for the rascal doubtless intended to lodge a ball in your body."

"In the arm, the body, or the head, that is not what I complain of; each profession has its vexations."

"And its pleasures also, Mr. Narcisse."

"Its pleasures!"

"Yes; for when a man as dexterous and courageous as you are, has been for a long time on the track of a nest of brigands, pursuing them from place to place, and from den to den, with such an excellent pointer as your servant, Bras-rouge, and at last finds them in a mousetrap, from which they cannot escape,

confess, Mr. Narcisse, that you have all the delight of the sportsman in springing upon them, to say nothing of the services which are rendered to justice by their capture."

"I should agree with you perfectly if the pointer was faithful; but I have my suspicions."

"Oh, Mr. Narcisse! do you believe——"

"I believe that instead of placing me on the right track, you amuse yourself with leading me astray, and thus abuse the confidence placed in you. Every day you promise to aid us to lay our hands upon this gang, but the day never arrives."

"And if that day should prove to be this very evening, as I am sure it will be; if I cause you to catch Barbillon, Nicholas, the widow, her daughter, and Chouette, will that be a good haul; answer me, yes or no. Can you mistrust me after that?"

"No; you will have rendered a great service, for we have against the whole of that gang strong suspicions, but no proof."

"So a little bit of a flagrant crime, by giving us an excuse for pouncing on them all at once, will help amazingly to square their accounts; hey! Mr. Narcisse?"

"And are you sure, that you are not an accomplice in the crime which they are about to commit?"

"Upon my honor, it was Chouette who came to propose it to me. She wished me to attract the brokeress to my house, when she learned, by means of my son, that Morel the lapidary, who lived in rue du Temple, worked in real diamonds, and that Mother Mathieu always carried with her jewels to a considerable amount. I accepted the job, and proposed to unite with the Martials and Barbillon, in order to place the whole gang in your hands."

"And the Schoolmaster—that man who is so strong and ferocious, who was constantly seen with Chouette in the *tapis-franc*!"

"The Schoolmaster!" said Bras-rouge, affecting astonishment.

"Yes: an escaped convict from the bagnio at Rochefort—a fellow by the name of Anselme Duresnel, who was sentenced for life. He has disfigured himself, so that he cannot be recognized. Have you no idea where he can be?"

"I have not," said Bras-rouge boldly, who had good reasons for telling the lie, inasmuch as the Schoolmaster was at that time confined in one of the caves of his tavern.

"We have some reason to believe that the Schoolmaster has been the perpetrator of a new murder. His capture would be an important one."

"It is now six weeks since any one has seen him."

"We are are therefore reproached for losing sight of him."

"There is nothing but reproaches, Mr. Narcisse—always reproaches!"

"There are not wanting good reasons for the reproaches. And how comes on smuggling?"

"I have to be acquainted with all sorts of people—smugglers and the rest of them—in order to give you the information which you desire. I pointed out to you the pipe which was passed through the barrière du Trone, and introduced into a house in the street * * *, for the purpose of introducing liquors into the city."

"I know all that," said Narcisse, interrupting Bras-rouge; "but for one that you denounce, you suffer ten to escape, and you continue your trade with impunity. I am sure that you feed from two mangers, as people say."

"Ah! Mr. Narcisse, I am incapable of so dishonorable a trade."

"And that is not all. There is a woman by the name of Mother Burette, a pawnbrokeress, who is said to be your private receiver."

"What can I do, Mr. Narcisse? They say so many things—the world is so wicked. I repeat it once more, that I must be intimate with all sorts of people: I even pretend to be guilty of all sorts of crimes, to appear even worse than they are, in order to lull their suspicions; but I confess that it almost breaks my heart to imitate them. I am surprised that any one can doubt my fidelity to the police, when I make such painful sacrifices."

"Poor man! I pity you with all my heart!"

"You may sneer, Mr. Narcisse; but, if the authorities believe what people say, why have they not visited the house of Mother Burette, and my own?"

"You know very well, that it is not to frighten the bandits, whom for a long time you have promised to surrender."

"And I am going to do it, Mr. Narcisse. Within one hour, they will be all tied up, and without much trouble, as three of them are women; and as for Nicholas and Barbillon, they are ferocious as tigers, but cowardly as hens."

"Tigers or hens," said Narcisse, opening his coat, and displaying the pistols which protruded from the pockets of his pantaloons, "I am prepared: I have something which will serve them."

"You will do well, however, to take two of your men with you, Mr. Narcisse. The most cowardly animals will show some spunk, when they are driven into a corner."

"I will place two men in the small room below, by the side of that into which you introduce the brokeress; and at the first signal, I will appear at one door, and my two men at the other."

"You must hurry, for the gang will arrive in a few moments, Mr. Narcisse."

"Very well; I will place my men, but I hope it will be for some purpose this time."

The conversation was here interrupted by a whistle, the signal agreed upon between Tortillard and Bras-rouge; for the latter approached the window, to see who was announced.

"Here is Chouette, already. Have you any faith now, Mr. Narcisse?"

"This is something, but it is not all. Well, well; I will place my men, and we shall see;" and the police-officer disappeared through a side-door.

CHAPTER IX. . . . . CHOUETTE.

The hurried walk of Chouette, and the heat of her ferocious fever for plunder and blood, had turned her hideous face purple, and her green eye glistened with wild joy. Tortillard followed her, with his limping gait. At the moment she was descending the stairs, the mischievous imp placed his foot upon the dragging folds of Chouette's petticoats, which tripped up the old woman, and, unable to sustain herself, she fell sprawling upon her hands and knees, abandoning her basket in her fall, from which a gold bracelet, adorned with emeralds and pearls, escaped. Chouette, having injured her head in the fall, picked up the bracelet, which, however, did not escape the piercing eye of Tortillard. She arose, and rushed furiously upon the little cripple, who was approaching her in a hypocritical manner, saying:

"Oh dear! you have sprained your foot, haven't you?"

Without any other response, Chouette seized Tortillard by the hair, and stooping down to his cheek, bit him with savage rage. Blood gushed from beneath her teeth. Tortillard in spite of his wickedness, in spite of the torment which he suffered, uttered not a complaint nor a cry. He wiped his bleeding face, and smiling in a forced manner, exclaimed:

"I'd rather you would n't kiss me quite so hard next time, do you hear, Chouette?"

"Wicked little monkey, why did you put your foot upon my dress? Was it to make me fall down?"

"Me! no indeed; I swear to you, I did not do it on purpose, my good Chouette; the idea that your good little Tortillard could intend to hurt you! he loves you too much for that; although you scold him, bite him, he is as much attached to you as a poor little dog to his master," said the urchin, in a soft hypocritical tone.

Deceived by Tortillard's hypocrisy, Chouette replied:

"Ah! very well: if I did bite you without cause, it will serve for the times when you have deserved it, brigand. Come, cheer up my boy, I have no grudge to-day; where is your thief of a father?"

"In the house. Do you wish that I shall go after him?"

"No. Have the Martials come?"

"Not yet."

"Then I have time to go down to Fourline's; I have something to say to the sightless old rogue."

"Are you going to the cave of the Schoolmaster?" said Tortillard, concealing, with difficulty, his diabolical joy.

"What is that to you?"

"To me!"

"Yes: you asked me that in a droll way."

"Because I was thinking of something funny."

"Let's have it."

"It is, that we ought to take him a pack of cards for his amusement," replied Tortillard, in a sly manner; "that would give him a variety; he plays the bite game with the rats, and being always the winner in the game, it must be tiresome at last."

Chouette burst into a laugh at this joke, and said to the little cripple: "Ho mamma's love of a monkey! I do not know any other urchin that has half so much wickedness, as this little villain. Go and bring a candle and light me down to Fourline's, and help me to open his door, you know very well that I cannot move it alone."

"Oh! indeed, no; it is too dark in the cave," said Tortillard, shaking his head.

"What! what! are you, who are as wicked as the devil, a

coward? I should like to see you show it. Come, go quick and tell your father, that I shall return instantly—that I have gone down to see Fourline—that we are going to talk about the publication of our marriage; he, he, he," grinned the monster. "Come, if you are quick, you shall be the groomsman at my wedding; and if you behave pretty, it will be you who will take my garter."

Tortillard went after the light, in a surly manner.

While waiting for him, Chouette, intoxicated by the success of her robbery, plunged her right hand into her basket, in order to feel the precious jewels which it contained. It was for the purpose of temporarily concealing her treasure, that she wished to descend to the cave of the Schoolmaster, and to enjoy as usual, the torments of her new victim.

We will soon inform the reader why, with the consent of Bras-rouge, Chouette had confined the Schoolmaster in the same subterranean cave into which the brigand had formerly precipitated Rodolphe. Tortillard, with a candle in his hand, soon appeared at the door of the tavern. Chouette followed him into the lower room, into which opened the trap-door with two panels, already described. The son of Bras-rouge, protecting the light with his hand, and preceding the old woman, descended slowly, a stone staircase, leading to a steep passage, at the end of which was the thick door of the cave, which had nearly been the grave of Rodolphe. Having arrived at the bottom of the stairs, Tortillard hesitated to follow Chouette.

"Well, wicked little devil, advance;" said she, turning round.

"Why it is so dark, and you go so fast, on the whole, I think I had better go back, and leave the candle with you."

'How can I open alone, the door of the cave? come along."

"No, I am too much afraid."

"If I have to come to you, take care."

"Since you threaten me, I will return;" and Tortillard moving back a few steps.

"Hear me; be gentle," continued Chouette, restraining her anger, "and I will give you something."

"That's right," said Tortillard, approaching; "speak to me in that way, and you can do anything you please with me, mother Chouette."

"Come along, come along, I am in a hurry."

"Yes, but you must promise that you will let me tease the Schoolmaster."

"Oh, some other time, I am in haste to-day."

"Only a little, only let me make him foam."

"Some other time, I tell you that I must go right back now."

"Why, then, do you wish to open the door of his *apartment?*"

"That is none of your business. Come, shut up; the Martials are already up stairs, perhaps, and I must speak to them. Be a good boy, and you won't be sorry for it. Come along."

"I must love you much, Chouette. You make me do just what you please," said Tortillard, crawling up toward her.

The flickering light of the candle, lighting dimly, that dark passage, presented the outlines of the hideous child against the green walls, dripping with moisture. At the foot of the passage, through the obscurity of the place, could be seen the low entrance of the cave, its thick door lined with bands of iron, and projecting from the darkness, the red tartan shawl and white cap of Chouette.

Thanks to her efforts and those of Tortillard, the door opened, creaking upon its rusty hinges. A gust of damp vapor escaped from that den, dark as the night. The candle, which was placed upon the ground, threw a few rays of light upon the first steps of the stone staircase, the bottom of which was completely lost in the darkness. A cry, or rather, a wild roar, was heard from the depths of the cave.

"Ah! there is Fourline, saying good day to his mamma," said Chouette, ironically, and she descended a few steps to conceal her basket in some corner.

"I am hungry" sung out the Schoolmaster, with a voice trembling with rage. "Do you wish to kill me here like a famished beast?"

"Are you hungry, big lazy fellow!" said Chouette, bursting into a laugh. "If that is the case, suck your thumb."

The noise of a chain which was stretched violently was now heard, followed by a groan of deep and restrained rage.

"Take care—take care—you will hurt your leg, as you did at the Bouqueval farm, poor, good papa!" said Tortillard.

"The child is right. Keep still, Fourline; keep still. The ring and chain are solid, you blind old dog. They came from father Micou, who sells nothing but what is good. It is your own fault. Why did you suffer yourself to be tied up during your sleep? We had only to pass the ring and chain round your leg, to bring you down here in a cool place, to preserve your complexion, you old fop."

"It is a pity, he will grow musty!" said Tortillard. The noise of the chain was repeated.

"Hallo! hallo! Fourline hops about like a lady-bug tied up by the leg," said the old hag. "Methinks I see him."

"Lady-bug, lady-bug, fly away home," sung out Tortillard. "Is the Schoolmaster your husband?"

This variation increased the hilarity of Chouette. Having thrust her basket in a hole formed by the caving in of the walls, she said, while rising: "Can you see, Fourline?"

"He cannot see," said Tortillard.

"The child is right. Do you hear, Fourline? When you returned from the farm, you should'n't have been such a fool as to play the good dog, and prevent me from washing Pegriotte's face with my vitriol. Besides, you spoke to me of your conscience—it was becoming delicate. I saw that your rascally *dough* was turning sour. You were becoming spoilt, a spy, and some day or other you might peach, you eyeless one."

"Take care, the blind old cur will bite you, for he is hungry," said Tortillard, pushing the old woman suddenly, and with all his strength.

Chouette fell headlong, uttering a terrible imprecation. She was heard rolling down to the bottom of the steps.

"Sisteboy! sisteboy! Go it, Chouette! Pounce upon her, old dog!" added Tortillard; and then, seizing the basket from the place where the old woman had placed it, he ascended with haste the steps, singing out with a burst of ferocious laughter: "That's a better push than I gave you before, hag! Chouette, you won't bite me again till the blood runs! You thought I had no grudge! Thank you, my cheek still bleeds."

"I've got her—I have hold of her!" exclaimed the Schoolmaster from the bottom of the cave.

"If you've got her, old chap, we must go shares," said Tortillard, laughing, as he halted at the top of the stairs.

"Help! help!" exclaimed Chouette in a strangled voice.

"Thank you, Tortillard," replied the Schoolmaster. And he was heard, uttering a grin of ferocious joy. "I forgive you all the wrong you have done me, and for your reward, you shall hear Chouette sing! Hear the screech-owl!"

"Bravo! bravo! Here I am in the first tier!" said Tortillard, seating himself at the top of the stairs.

CHAPTER X..... THE CAVE.

TORTILLARD, seated upon the first step of the stone-stairs, raised his light for the purpose of illuminating the frightful scene, that was about to take place in the depths of the cave; but the darkness was too impenetrable to be dissipated by so feeble a light. The son of Bras-rouge could distinguish nothing.

Not a word, not a cry, escaped during the obstinate struggle between the Schoolmaster and Chouette. Occasionally, however, the heavy and stifled breathing which ever accompanies violent and restrained exertion, was heard. Tortillard, seated upon the stone step, commenced stamping with his feet in that peculiar manner evinced by spectators at a theatre, when anxious to see the play commence; then he would utter those cries, so familiar to the occupants of the galleries in the theatres of the Boulevard.

"Eh, there! up with the curtain; the play; music!"

"Ah! I've got you as I wan't you, now," growled the Schoolmaster from the bottom of the cave, "and you shall——"

A desperate effort on the part of Chouette interrupted him. She was struggling with all the energy that the fear of death occasions.

"Louder—can't hear!" cried Tortillard.

"It is no use to bite my hand. I shall hold you as I please," continued the Schoolmaster. Then, having apparently secured Chouette to his satisfaction, he added:

"That's it; now listen to me."

"Tortillard, call your father!" cried Chouette, in an exhausted and suffocating voice. "Help! help!"

"Hustle the old woman out—she makes too much noise—can't hear for her—silence there!" sang out the little cripple, with a roar of laughter.

It was impossible for the cries of Chouette to pierce the two stories of the cavern. The miserable creature, perceiving that she could expect no aid from the son of Bras-rouge, wished to tempt him by a last resort.

"Tortillard, go and get your father to assist me, and I will give you my basket. It is full of jewels. It is under the stone there."

"How generous you are! thank you, ma'am! Haven't I already got your old basket? How it chinks inside!" said Tor-

tillard, shaking it. "If you will give me right-a-way a couple of cents' worth of hot crumpets, I will go and call papa."

"Have pity on me, and I——"

Chouette could not finish the sentence. Again all was silent. The young cripple recommenced stamping upon the step of the stairs where he was squatting, accompanying the noise of his feet, with the following cries:

"Ho, there! no play yet? Up with the curtain, or we will tear it into rags; go ahead with the play; the performance there; music."

"Now, Chouette, you can no longer stun me with your cries," said the Schoolmaster, after a few moments, during which he had evidently managed to gag the old woman. "You now see," he continued, in a hoarse and measured voice, "that I do not wish to put an end to you at once. Torture for torture. You have made me suffer enough. I must have a long talk with you before I kill you. Yes, a long talk! It will be awful to you! Yes, terrible, wretch!"

"Hallo, there! No nonsense, old fellow!" cried Tortillard, partly rising. "Punish her, but don't injure her. When you talk of killing, it is all make believe; is it not? I still cling to my Chouette. I have only lent her to you. You must return her to me again. Do not make me wretched by destroying my Chouette, or else I will go after papa."

"Don't alarm yourself; she is only getting what she deserves—a profitable lesson," said the Schoolmaster, desirous of quieting Tortillard, from the fear that he might seek assistance.

"Excellent! bravo! the play is about to begin!" exclaimed the son of Bras-rouge, having no idea that the Schoolmaster would seriously threaten the life of the horrible old woman.

"Now, let us have our talk, Chouette," said the Schoolmaster in a calm voice. "To begin then; you see, since the dream at the Bonqueval farm, which brought before my eyes all our crimes—since that dream—which has almost made me mad; which will yet make me mad: for in the deep solitude and lonesomeness in which I live, all my thoughts concentrate, in spite of myself, upon this dream—a wonderful change has come over me. Yes; I have looked with horror upon my past wickedness. In the first place, I prevented you from torturing Goualeuse; that was nothing. In chaining me here in this cave; in compelling me to suffer hunger and cold; in delivering me from your tormenting presence, you have left me to most frightful reflections. Oh! you do not know what it is to be alone; constantly alone, with a black veil over my eyes; as that unforgiving man called it, who punished me! It is horrible! Observe now; here, in this cave did I precipitate him, for the purpose of killing him; and this cave is the place of my own punishment; perhaps it will be my tomb. I say again, that it is horrible. All that this man predicted has thus far been realized. He said to me: 'You have abused your strength—you shall tremble before the weakest;' so has it been. He said to me, 'Hereafter, for ever isolated from the external world, you shall be compelled to turn in your thoughts upon yourself, and repent.' That day has arrived; solitude has purified me. I could not have believed it possible. Another proof that I am, perhaps, less wicked than heretofore, is, that I experience an infinite joy in thus holding you in my clutches, monster! not to revenge myself, but to revenge our victims. Yes; I shall have fulfilled a duty, when, with my own hands, I shall have punished my accomplice. A voice tells me that if you had sooner fallen in my power, much blood—much blood would have been spared that flowed from our blows. I look now with horror upon the murder I have committed; and yet—does it not appear strange to you! it is without fear, and with a sense of security, that I am about to commit upon you a most frightful murder, with all its horrible refinements. Speak—speak—can you imagine that?"

"Bravo! well done, old no-eyes! go it," cried Tortillard, applauding; "how laughable it is!"

"Very laughable," continued the Schoolmaster, in a hollow voice. "Now listen, Chouette, I must finish explaining to you, how by degrees, I have come to repent. The revelation will be odious to your hardened heart, but it will prove to you how implacable should be the vengeance which I am about to visit upon you, in the name of our victims. I must hasten. The delight in having you in my clutches, makes my blood course through my veins—my temples beat with the same violence, as when I recall my dream; my mind wanders perhaps; one of my spells is coming over me—but I shall have time to make your approaching death frightful, by forcing you to hear me."

"Courage, Chouette," cried Tortillard; "courage: now for the answer. What? don't you know your part? ask the devil to prompt you, my old woman."

"Oh! it is useless to strike me, and bite me," continued the Schoolmaster, after a short silence; "you shall not escape me; you have bitten my finger to the bone, but I will tear out your tongue, if you stir. Let us continue our conversation.

"On finding myself alone in undisturbed silence, and in the darkness of night, I began to experience an excess of furious, powerless rage; for the first time my head lost its reason. Yes, although awake, my dream returned; you remember the dream? the little old man of the rue de Roule; the drowned woman; the cattle dealer; and you hovering over these phantoms. I say to you, it was horrible; I am blind, but my thoughts assumed shapes and figures, constantly representing in a visible and almost palpable manner, the features of my victims. Even without this frightful dream, my mind, constantly absorbed by the remembrance of my past crimes, would have been troubled with similar visions.

"Without doubt, when the sight is destroyed, controlling ideas image themselves almost materially in the brain. Sometimes however, compelled to contemplate them with a resigned terror, these threatening spectres appear to have pity on me; they turn pale, become obscure, and disappear. Then I feel as if awakened from a terrible dream; I feel weak, dejected, and heart-broken; and would you believe it—oh! how you will laugh, Chouette—I weep; do you hear? I weep; what! you do not laugh! Laugh I say, laugh!"

Chouette uttered a low and stifled groan.

"Louder," cried Tortillard; "can't hear."

"Yes," continued the Schoolmaster, "I weep because I suffer, and my rage is all in vain. I say to myself, 'to-morrow, the day after, and for ever, I shall be a prey to this same fit of delirium, and to this sad desolation.' What a life, oh! what a life! I had better chosen death, than thus be buried alive in this abyss in which my thoughts are so constantly immerged. Blind, solitary, and a prisoner; what can distract me from my remorse? nothing, nothing!

"When the phantoms have ceased to pass and repass before the black veil that covers my eyes, there are other tortures, other bitter comparisons. I say to myself, 'If I had remained an honest man to this hour, I should be free, tranquil, happy, loved, and honored by mine, instead of being blind and chained in this dungeon, at the mercy of my accomplices.'

"Alas! the regret at losing happiness through crime, is a first step toward repentance. And when to repentance is joined an expiation of frightful severity—an expiation which changes life into an interminable restlessness, filled with revengeful hallucinations, or desponding reflections—perhaps, forgiveness may succeed to that remorse, and to that expiation."

"Take care old fellow!" cried Tortillard; "you are repeating Mr. Moëssard's* part. It won't do, it won't do."

The Schoolmaster did not listen to the son of Bras-rouge.

"Does it not astonish you to hear me talk thus, Chouette? If I had continued to remain reckless in the commission of other bloody crimes, or to the savage intoxication of the life of the bagnio, this salutary change, I am well aware, would have never operated upon me. But alone, blind, stung by remorse, what have I to think of? Of new crimes? How commit them! Of escaping? How escape! And if I should escape, where should I go! What use should I make of my liberty? No: I must live hereafter in an eternal night, between the anguish of repentance, and the fear of the terrible apparitions, by which I am pursued. Sometimes, however, a feeble ray of hope lightens up the darkness which surrounds me; a moment of calm, succeeds my torments. Yes, sometimes I am enabled to plot against the spectres that besiege me, by placing in opposition to them the recollections of an honest and peaceable past life; in pointing back to the days of my youth, and of my infancy. Happily, you see, the most wicked enjoy, at least, a few years of peace and innocence, to oppose to those of a criminal and bloody character. We are not born wicked. The most depraved have possessed the amiable ingenuousness of infancy; have known the sweet enjoyments of that lovely age. Again, I repeat to you, there are times when I feel a bitter consolation in reflecting: 'At this hour I am doomed to the execration of all; but the time has been, when I was beloved and protected, because I was then innocent and good.' Alas! well may I seek a refuge in the past, when I can; for it is there alone, that I find the least tranquillity."

In pronouncing these last words, the voice of the Schoolmaster had lost its harshness; this ungovernable man appeared to be deeply moved. He continued: "Such has been the salutary influence of these thoughts upon me, that my rage becomes appeased. Courage, strength, will fail me to inflict punishment upon you. No, it does not belong to me to shed your blood."

"Bravo! old man! you see it was all a joke," said Tortillard, applauding.

* An actor now on the stage.

"No, it does not belong to me to shed your blood; it would be a murder, excusable perhaps, but still it would be a murder; and I am haunted by spectres enough already; perhaps, also, the day of your repentance may arrive."

While speaking these words, the Schoolmaster had in some measure, released Chouette, and given to her some freedom of motion. She profited by it to seize the stiletto which she had placed in her dress, after the murder, and to strike the bandit a violent blow, in order to release herself entirely.

He uttered a cry of intense pain. The ferocity of his hatred, rage, and revenge—all his bloody instincts immediately awoke—exasperated by the sudden attack, beneath which his already shaken reason was entirely overthrown.

"Viper! I have felt your tooth!" he exclaimed, in a fearful tone; and seizing Chouette, who had expected to escape, with a still more vigorous grasp: "You have crawled into the cave, but I will bruise your head!" he said, in a still more furious tone. "You were waiting for the appearance of the spectres! yes, the blood is rushing to my head—my ears ring, my brain reels—they are about to appear! I am not mistaken. There! there they are! they loom from the darkness of the cave! they approach me with their pale visages, and red foaming blood! Ha! ha! it frightens you; you squirm; you struggle! but be quiet, you will not see them. I will have pity on you; I will make you blind! eyeless, like myself!"

The Schoolmaster paused; Chouette howled in such a terrible manner, that Tortillard started from his seat, and stood upright. The screams of Chouette brought to a crisis the frenzied paroxysms of the Schoolmaster.

"Sing!" said he, in a low voice, "sing, Chouette, sing! chant your death-song; you are happy; you no longer see the ghosts of those we murdered! the little old man of the rue du Roule; the drowned woman; the drover; but I see them: they approach! they touch me! ha! how cold they are!"

The last ray of intelligence was extinguished in this last frightful howl of the demoniac. From that moment the Schoolmaster reasoned no more, spoke no more; he lashed himself and roared like a wild beast, surrendered entirely to the savage instinct of blood for blood. But something still more frightful, now occurred in the awful darkness of the cave; a repeated stamping and crushing of the feet upon some object, now broke upon the fearful silence. With this noise was mingled a sound like that of a box filled with bones, dashed against a stone with violence; distressing and piercing cries, and infernal bursts of laughter, were the frightful accompaniment of these fear-inspiring blows—a death-gurgle followed, and the awful stillness again resumed its sway—nothing was heard—nothing but the crushing of the feet on bones!

Soon, a distant noise of steps and voices penetrated even to the depths of the cave; brilliant lights danced about in the extremity of the subterranean passage. Tortillard, terrified by the awful scene which had reached his ears, perceived several individuals, bearing torches, descending the stairs rapidly. The cave was almost instantly invaded by several police-officers, at the head of whom was Narcisse Borel, accompanied by municipal guards. Tortillard was seized upon the first steps of the cave, with the basket of Chouette in his hand. Borel, attended by some of his satellites, descended into the cave of the Schoolmaster, and all stopped suddenly, shocked by the horrible sight before them. Chained by the leg, to an enormous stone placed in the middle of the dungeon, was the Schoolmaster, a frightful monster, with hair on end, and a long beard covering his face, with white foam gushing from his mouth, clothed with blood-stained rags, and lashing himself against the side of the cave, and dashing his fetters like a wild beast in his lair, dragging after him the corpse of Chouette, which was entangled in the chain, whose head was frightfully crushed, mutilated, and ground to atoms. A violent struggle could only tear from him the bleeding remains of his accomplice, and to place the handcuffs upon his powerful limbs. After a desperate resistance, they succeeded in conveying him to the lower room of Bras-rouge's tavern—a large, dark room, into which light was admitted by only one window.

Guarded by officers, and with manacles on their hands, Barbillon, and Nicholas, with his mother and sister, were discovered. They had been arrested the very moment they were dragging away the brokeress to murder her. The unfortunate woman was gradually recovering her senses in an adjoining apartment. Stretched upon the floor and restrained with difficulty, by the united strength of two police-officers, the Schoolmaster, slightly wounded in the arm by Chouette, mad as a demon, roared like a bull beneath the knife of the butcher. At times, a convulsive effort would throw his body from the floor.

Barbillon was seated upon the bench, with his head drooping, his lips colorless, his face livid and lead-like, his eye fixed and ferocious; his long greasy hair falling upon his blouse, which had been torn in the struggle, and his wrists bound in iron fetters, lay helpless on his knees. The juvenile appearance of the young reprobate, who was scarcely eighteen years of age, the regularity of his features, the smoothness of a beardless face, already marked with the stamp of crime and degradation, rendered still more deplorable his visage of guilt and debauchery. He opened not his lips. It was difficult to say whether his apparent insensibility was to be attributed to stupidity, or to a cool, determined energy of character. His breathing was hurried; and now and then, with his manacled hands, he wiped away the perspiration from his pale forehead.

Calebasse was seated by his side; her cap torn from her head in the struggle, displayed her yellow hair, tied behind her head with a string, and falling down in thin and tangled locks. More enraged than despondent, with her jaundiced face slightly flushed, she cast glances of disdain and contempt upon the cowed and disconsolate Nicholas, who was seated upon a chair opposite to her.

The bandit, foreseeing the doom which awaited him, with his body bent, and his head inclined, and his shaking knees striking together, seemed completely overpowered with terror. His teeth gnashed together convulsively, and deep groans expressed the anguish of his guilty mind.

The Mother Martial, the widow of the guillotined man, stood alone, leaning against the wall, and had lost nothing of her audacity. With her head raised, she cast around her an undaunted look: the brazen mask of her face betrayed no emotion. At the sight of Bras-rouge, however, who was conveyed to this room, after having attended to the minute search of the house which the commissaire and his clerk had instituted, the features of the widow, in spite of her inflexible calmness, contracted themselves. Her small and glassy eye flashed like an enraged viper; her lips, pressed together, became of a more ashy hue; and she stretched out her manacled arms; and then, as if she had regretted this manifestation of powerless rage, she subdued her emotion, and immediately resumed her impassible calmness.

While the commissaire was making a memorandum of the arrest, assisted by his clerk, Narcisse Borel, rubbing his hands together, threw a complacent look upon his formidable captives, the capture of whom had delivered Paris from a gang of most dangerous criminals. But, acknowledging how useful and auxiliary Bras-rouge had been, he could not restrain a grateful and expressive glance.

The father of Tortillard was to share, until after their trial, the prison of those he had denounced. Like them he had fetters upon his hands, and he appeared to be more terrified than either of his accomplices, grimacing and puckering his weasel face into an expression of the most mournful despair, and uttering lugubrious sighs. He kissed Tortillard, as if he sought consolation in those paternal caresses. The young cripple seemed vastly indifferent to these demonstrations of fatherly tenderness, for he had just learned that he would be committed, for a season, to the prison for young delinquents.

"What a misfortune, to be compelled to leave my dear little son!" exclaimed Bras-rouge, affecting grief. "We are more miserable than the rest, Mother Martial; for we are torn from our children."

The widow could no longer retain her *sang-froid:* not doubting in the least the treachery which she had predicted, she exclaimed:

"I was very sure that you had sold my son, who is at Toulon. Take that, Judas!" and she spat in his face. "You have sold our heads! Never mind; they will see a glorious death—the death of true Martials!"

"Yes; we are not afraid of death," added Calebasse, with savage exultation.

The widow, indicating Nicholas with a glance of overpowering contempt, said to her daughter:

"That coward will disgrace his family on the scaffold."

A few moments afterward, the widow and Calebasse, accompanied by two officers, were entering a hack, in order to be transported to Saint Lazare. Bras-rouge, Barbillon, and Nicholas were conveyed to la Force. The Schoolmaster was committed to the Conciergerie, where were cells destined for those criminals who were temporarily deranged.

CHAPTER XI..... THE INTRODUCTION.

"The evil which the wicked do without designing it, is often more cruel than that which they premeditate."—SCHILLER. *Wallenstein, Act II.*

A few days after the death of Madam Seraphin, the murder of Chouette, and the arrest of the gang of malefactors at the

cabaret of Bras-rouge, Rodolphe went to the house in the rue du Temple.

As we have already said, Rodolphe had determined to bring cunning to bear against the cunning of Jacques Ferrand, in order to discover his crimes, to oblige him to make reparation, and inflict a terrible vengeance upon him, if the audacity and hypocrisy of the man should succeed in setting at defiance the law. To effect this purpose, Rodolphe had ordered to be released from Germany the intriguing *metisse*, the unworthy wife of the negro David. That creature, as beautiful as she was perverse, as enchanting as she was dangerous, had arrived on the previous day, and had received the minutest instructions from the Baron de Graün. In his last conversation with Madam Pipelet, Rodolphe had suggested to her the design of supplying in Jacques Ferrand's family the situation, which Louise had formerly occupied, by Cecile. The portière had acted conformably to her promise, and Madam Seraphin had received her overtures with pleasure, and agreed to address herself to the notary upon the subject; which she actually did, in the terms the most favorable to Cecile, the very morning of the day the housekeeper had been drowned near the island of the ravageur. Rodolphe had now waited upon Madam Pipelet, to learn the result of Cecile's introduction. To his great astonishment, upon entering the lodge, he found, although it was eleven o'clock in the morning, Mr. Pipelet in bed, and Anastasia standing near, and offering him a beverage. Alfred, whose brows were hid beneath a formidable cotton night-cap, gave no answer to Anastasia, and she concluded that he was asleep. She closed the curtains of the bed, and, turning round, perceived Rodolphe. According to her usage, she raised the back of her left hand to her periwig, and gave the military salute.

"Your servant, my king of tenants. You find me in great trouble *extenuated*. There are great goings on in the house, to say nothing of Alfred's being confined to his bed yesterday."

"What is the matter with him?"

"Can you ask such a question?"

"How?"

"Always the same thing. The monster is more furious than ever after Alfred: he makes a perfect simpleton of him. I do not know what to do with him."

"Cabrion again?"

"Yes, again."

"He must be the devil!"

"I must believe so myself, Mr. Rodolphe; for this villain always knows the moments when I am absent. My heels are hardly turned, when—puff!—he is on the back of my old beloved, who can't defend himself any more than a child. Even yesterday, while I was gone to Mr. Ferrand's, the notary—there is news there, also——"

"And Cecile?" said Rodolphe, quickly. "I came to know ——"

"Hear, my king of tenants, don't interrupt me. I have a thousand things to tell you; but I shall lose myself, if you break in upon me with your questions."

"Proceed. I will listen to you."

"In the first place, just think, that yesterday they came to arrest Mother Burette."

"What! the pawnbrokeress on the third floor?"

"The same. She had a great many funny trades, besides lending money. She was, in the bargain, a receiver, a smelter of metals, a thief: in short, she was everything that is bad. The worst of it is, that her old lover, Mr. Bras-rouge, our landlord, is also arrested. I tell you, there are great goings on in this house!"

"What? Is Bras-rouge arrested?"

"Yes: in his cabaret on the Champs Elysees. They have jugged that wicked cripple of a Tortillard also. They say that ever so many murders have taken place in his house; that there was a gang of brigands there; that Chouette, one of mother Burette's friends, had been strangled; and, that if the officers had not interfered in time, Mother Mathieu would have been murdered, the brokeress, who employed poor Morel. Do you see how much news I have?"

"Bras-rouge arrested, and Chouette dead!" said Rodolphe to himself with astonishment. "The horrible old woman has deserved her fate, and poor Fleur de Marie is avenged."

"Now, as for what concerns this house, not excepting even the new infamy of Cabrion. I will finish that brigand at once. You shall hear of his impudence. After Mother Burette was arrested, and we had heard of Bras-rouge's also, I told my old beloved, 'You must trot away to the proprietor of this house, and tell him that Bras-rouge is caged.' Alfred starts. After two hours he came back, but in such a condition! such a condition! pale as a sheet, and blowing like a porpoise!"

"What was the matter with him!"

"You will see soon, Mr. Rodolphe. Only think, that about two steps from here, there is a tall white wall. My old beloved, in leaving the house, happened to look upon that wall, and what do you suppose he saw, in large charcoal letters, upon it? 'Pipelet—Cabrion,' united by a monstrous hyphen. It is the union of his name to that rascal, which makes him sick at the stomach. That nearly upset him; but as he went a step further, what do you think he saw on the great gate of the temple? 'Pipelet—Cabrion,' always with a hyphen. He keeps a going, and at every step he sees those cursed words written on the fences, the walls, and the houses, everywhere, 'Pipelet—Cabrion.'* My old beloved began to see thirty-six candles, and he thought that every person stared at him. He was so much ashamed, that he pulled his hat over his nose He went to the boulevard, thinking that the villain had confined his vile jokes to the rue du Temple. But it was not so. All along the Boulevard wherever there was a place to write, he saw, 'Pipelet—Cabrion.' Finally, the poor old soul arrived at the house of the proprietor, so completely upset, that after having stammered away for half-an-hour in his ears, the man did not understand a word of what Alfred went to tell him. He sent him away, calling him an old fool, and told him to send me to make the explanation. Alfred returned by another street, in order to avoid the names which he had seen written on the walls; but it was of no use."

"What! 'Pipelet—Cabrion' again?"

"Just as you say, my king of tenants; so that the poor, dear man, arrived here in great distress of mind, and determines to go into exile. He related to me the new devilry. I calmed him as much as I could, and started with Mademoiselle Cecile to go to the notary's house, before visiting the proprietor. Do you think that this is all? No, indeed! I had hardly turned my back, when that Cabrion, who had been watching for my departure, had the impudence to send here two big she-devils, who attacked Alfred! My hair stands on end! I will tell you about it, by-and-by, but let us finish with the notary first. I started in the carriage with Mademoiselle Cecile, as you recommended to me. She wore the costume of a German peasant, when she arrived here, and had not time enough to have any other dresses made, as I was to tell Mr. Ferrand. You may believe me, if you please, my king of tenants, I have seen many pretty girls; I saw myself in the spring-time of my life; but never did I see, including myself, a young girl who could approach within a hundred leagues of Cecile. She has, particularly in the blink of her large roguish black eyes, something—something—I don't know what it is; but it strikes right into one. What eyes! what eyes! In short, although Alfred is not very susceptible, the first time that he saw her, he turned as red as a beet, and nothing could tempt him to look at her a second time. For an hour he wriggled about on his chair, as if he was sitting on nettles. He told me afterward, that he couldn't understand it, but that the look of Cecile brought to his mind all the stories of that impudent Brudamanti, about those savage women, which made him blush so much."

"But the notary! the notary!"

"I have come to him now, Mr. Rodolphe; it was about seven o'clock in the evening, when we arrived at the house of Mr. Ferrand. I told the porter to inform his master that Madam Pipelet had arrived, with a servant of whom Madam Seraphin had spoken, and whom she wished to see at the house. Thereupon, the porter sighed, and asked me 'If I knew what had happened to Madam Seraphin?' I said 'No:' ah! Mr. Rodolphe, there is more goings on."

"What then?"

"Madam Seraphin was drowned while taking a country excursion with one of her relatives."

"Drowned on a country excursion in the winter!" exclaimed Rodolphe, with surprise.

"Yes, Mr. Rodolphe, she is indeed drowned. As for myself, it causes me more surprise than sadness, for since the misfortune of that poor Louise whom she denounced, I have always hated the Seraphin. Therefore I said to myself, 'If she is drowned, I sha'n't die for it:' that's my disposition."

"And Mr. Ferrand?"

"The porter told me at first, that he thought I should not be able to see his master, and he asked me to wait a moment in his lodge; but after a second, he returned for me, and we crossed the yard and entered a room on the lower floor. There was a poor miserable candle in the room, and the notary was seated in the corner of the fire-place, where the remnants of coal were smoking. What a miserable shop! I had never seen Mr. Fer-

* It will be perhaps remembered, that the name of Capdeville, was written on all the walls, in every part of Paris, by the trick of some of the artists.

rand before; good God! how ugly he is! He might offer me the throne of Araby to play tricks with him, but 't would all be in vain."

"And was the notary struck with the beauty of Cecile?"

"How could I tell, when the glasses were over his eyes? What can an old deacon like him, know about women? However, when we entered, he kind of hopped upon his chair, probably from surprise at the Alsatian costume of Cecile, for she looked like one of those broom-girls, only a million times better, with her short petticoats and pretty legs, with blue and red stockings on them. My eyes! what a calf! and her ancles so fine! and with such a dear little foot; in short, the notary seemed quite upset."

"It was probably this singular costume of Cecile, which made the impression."

"I must believe so; but the ticklish moment was coming. Fortunately, I remembered the maxim you gave me, which was of great service to me."

"What maxim?"

"'What you wish for, you must not appear to wish for, and that which you do not wish for, you must appear to wish for.' Then I said to myself, 'My king of tenants must get rid of the German woman by placing her with the master of Louise; push ahead! I have got a story to tell;' so I said to the notary, not giving him time to breathe. 'Pardon me, sir, if my niece comes dressed in the fashion of her country; but she has just arrived, and she has no clothes but those which she has on, and I have no money with which to purchase her any others; besides, it would not be worth while to do so, for we have only come to thank you for telling Madam Seraphin that you consented to see Cecile, after the good testimonials which I gave respecting her: but I fear she will not suit you, sir.'"

"Well done, Madam Pipelet," exclaimed Rodolphe.

"'Why will not your niece suit me?' said the notary, who had again seated himself by the fire, and seemed to look at us over his glasses.

"'Because Cecile begins to be homesick, sir; she has only been here three days, and she wishes to return, although she had to beg her way and sell little brooms, according to the custom among her country-women.'

"'And will you, who are her relative, suffer that?'

"'I am her relative, it is true, but she is an orphan girl twenty years old, and the mistress of her own actions.'

"'Pshaw! the mistress of her actions at that age! A girl at that age should obey her relations,' said the notary, roughly; and thereupon, Cecile began to cry and tremble, snugging up to me close, frightened probably at the notary."

"And what did Jacques Ferrand do?"

"He continued grumbling, saying, 'If you abandon a girl of that age, you will ruin her. She return to Germany, begging! fine resource; and what an aunt you would be, to permit such a thing.'

"'Bravo, bravo!' said I to myself, 'I've got you, old kangaroo; Cecile shall stay in your house, as true as my name is Pipelet. I am her aunt, it is true,' I replied, in a complaining tone, 'and it's a burdensome relationship for me; I have enough upon my hands without her; I prefer that my niece should clear out, than be an expense to me. The devil take those parents, who send a large girl like that, without giving her any money.'

"At these words, Cecile, who played her part well, burst into tears; thereupon, the notary, in a grave hollow voice, like a preacher, began to say, 'You will have to give an account to God, for the trust which He has committed to your hands. It would be a crime to expose that young girl to perdition. I am willing to assist you in this charitable work, if your niece will promise me to be laborious, honest, and pious, and above all, not run into the streets; I will take compassion upon her, and admit her into my service.' 'Oh, no! no! I had rather go back home,' said Cecile, crying."

"Her dangerous mendacity has not failed her," thought Rodolphe; "the diabolical creature has fully comprehended the orders of the Baron de Graün." And the Prince added, aloud, "Did Mr. Ferrand appear displeased at the disinclination of Cecile?"

"Yes, Mr. Rodolphe; he grumbled between his teeth, and said to her in a surly tone: 'It's no matter what you like or dislike; the question is, which course is the most becoming, the most proper. God will not forsake you, if you lead an upright life and fulfil your religious obligations. You will remain in a habitation that is perfectly holy, and if your aunt really loves you, she will accept my offer. You will have small wages at first, but if, by your good conduct, you shall deserve higher, I will afterward increase them, perhaps.' 'Good!' I exclaimed to myself, 'you are in for it, Mr. Notary: Cecile is sure of roosting in your house, old stingy, heartless, son of a gun! The Seraphin was many years in your service, and you don't look as if you knew that she was drowned day before yesterday.' And I added, aloud, 'To be sure, sir, the situation is a very good one, but, if this young girl is homesick?' 'She will get over it,' replied the notary; 'come, decide. Do you say yes or no? if you accept, bring your niece to-morrow night at this hour, and I will admit her at once into my service. My porter will inform her what we shall expect her to do. As for her wages, I will give her, at first, twenty francs a month and her board.' 'Won't you give her twenty-five francs, sir?' 'No; if she satisfies me, I will think about it by-and-by. But I must inform you that your niece must not be running out, nor have people calling to visit her.' 'Who do you suppose would come to see her?' said I; 'she knows no one but myself in Paris, and I have to attend to my door; it has put me all out of sorts to be compelled to accompany her here; you will not see me again, sir. She will be as much a stranger to me as if she had never left Germany. As for her running out, there is a very simple means of preventing that: let her continue to wear the costume of her country, and she won't dare to venture into the street.' 'You are right,' said the notary to me; 'besides, it is honorable to have an attachment to our national costume; she will, therefore, continue to dress as an Alsatian.' 'Come,' said I to Cecile, who, with her head down, was still crying, 'you must decide, my girl: a good place in an honest house, is not found every day; and besides, if you refuse, you may look out for yourself, for I sha'n't trouble myself about you.' Thereupon Cecile said, crying and sobbing, that she would consent to remain, on condition that, if, within a fortnight, she did not become more contented, she should be permitted to go home.' 'I do not wish to keep you by force,' said the notary; 'I shall have no trouble to find servants. Here is money to bind the bargain; and all that your aunt will have to do, is to return with you to-morrow night.' Cecile had not ceased crying. I took the old stingy devil's fee of forty sous, and we returned here together."

"Well done! Madam Pipelet. I have not forgotten my promise; take the reward I agreed to give you, if you succeeded in securing employment for that poor girl, who embarrassed me."

"Wait until to-morrow, my king of tenants," said Madam Pipelet, refusing the money of Rodolphe; "for after all Mr. Ferrand might change his mind, when I take Cecile to him to-night."

"I do not think that he will change his mind. But where is Cecile?"

"In the room that adjoins the apartment of the Commander; she does not stir from it, as you ordered, and appears as resigned as a young lamb, although she has such eyes! such eyes! But, speaking of the Commander, is n't he an intriguing chap? When he came here to superintend the removal of his furniture, he told me that, if there were any letters brought here for Madam Vincent, they were intended for him, and to forward them to his house, No. 5, rue Mondovi. That fine bird has assumed the name of a female—is n't he a cunning one? But that is not all; did he not have the impudence to ask me what had become of his wood? 'Your wood! why do n't you speak of your forest at once?' I replied. Pshaw! two wretched loads of wood, not worth a sou, one of them of floated wood and the other green; for the pinchpenny didn't buy good wood. What airs he put on about it! His wood! 'I burned your wood,' I said to him, 'to preserve your furniture from dampness. If I had not done it, mushrooms would have grown upon your embroidered head-gear, and your fircly dressing-gown, which you put on often enough for no purpose, while waiting for the little lady who was making a joke of you.'"

A deep and plaintive groan from the couch of Alfred, interrupted Madam Pipelet. "The old darling is sighing; he is going to wake up. Will you excuse me, my king of tenants?"

"Certainly: I have some further inquiries to put to you."

"Well, old beloved, how do you feel now?" asked Madam Pipelet, opening the curtains. "Here is Mr. Rodolphe, who knows the new infamy of Cabrion, and pities you from the bottom of his soul."

"Ah, sir!" said Alfred, turning in a languishing manner toward Rodolphe, "I shall never recover from this last shock; the monster has reached my heart. I am the sole topic of conversation in the Capital; my name is read on all the walls of Paris, united to the name of that reprobate, 'Pipelet—Cabrion,' with an enormous hyphen—a hyphen, sir! I, sir, joined to that infamous blackguard, in the face of the metropolis of Europe!"

"Mr. Rodolphe is acquainted with that, but does not know about your adventures last evening with those big she-devils."

"Alas! sir, he reserved the master-piece of infamy for the

last; it went beyond all limits," said Alfred, in a lugubrious tone.

"Relate to me, Mr. Pipelet, your new misfortune."

"All that he has done is nothing, compared with this last atrocity; he has accomplished his objects, thanks to his infamous perseverance. I do not know whether I have strength enough to relate the adventure. Modesty and confusion will choke my utterance."

Mr. Pipelet, with a great effort, assumed a sitting posture, drew his woollen shirt over his breast, and commenced in these terms:

"My spouse had just left. Absorbed in reflection at the new defamation of my name, written on the walls of the Capital, I sought for some distraction from painful reflections, by putting a new sole upon a boot, which I had for twenty times taken up and abandoned, owing to the obstinate persecutions of my tormentor. I was seated before the table when I discovered that the door of my lodge was opened, and a woman entered. She was wrapped up in a cloak, with a hood to it, which came over her head. I arose politely from my seat, and touched my hat with my hand. At that moment, a second woman, wrapped up in the same manner, entered my lodge, and locked the door upon the inside. Although I was astonished at the familiarity of this proceeding, and the silence of the two women, I again arose from my chair, and touched my hat a second time. Then, sir, then sir—I never can proceed, sir, my modesty revolts."

"Come, go ahead, you old male prude! we are all men here: go on with your story."

"Then," continued Alfred, blushing up to his eyes, "their cloaks suddenly fell, and what did I behold! a couple of sirens or nymphs, with no other garment but a tunic of ivy, with their heads crowned with leaves. I was petrified. Both of the creatures advanced toward me, stretching out their arms, as if to seduce me to their embrace."*

"The jades! the jades!" said Anastasia.

"The advances of these immodest women shocked me," continued Alfred, animated with chaste indignation; "and according to that habit, which never abandons me in critical epochs of my life, I remained immovable upon my chair. Taking advantage of my surprise, the two sirens moved forward toward me in a sort of dance, ballancing themselves, their legs and arms. I became more and more immovable, they touch me, they clasp me in their arms."

"What impudent jades! to clasp in their arms a married man of your age! If I had been there with my broomstick," exclaimed Anastasia, "I would have made the nymphs cut a pigeon-wing, I tell you!"

"When I felt their arms around me, my blood rushed to my heart, my strength failed me, and I fainted. Then the most impudent of the sirens, a tall blonde, bent over my shoulders, and snatched away my hat, and left my head bare; keeping up her incessant dancing pace, and balancing her arms, and pirouetting. Her accomplice then drew from her foliage a pair of scissors, and gathered into a knot all the hair upon the back part of my head, and cut off the whole of it—the whole of it! sir—keeping up her pigeon-wings, and said, in a measured tone: 'It is for Cabrion, for Cabrion, for Cab—ri—on!' and the other impudent jade repeated the song, 'T'is for Cabrion, for Cab—ri—on!'"

After a pause, and a distressing sigh, Alfred continued: "During this infamous violation, I raised my eyes, and I saw, smack against the window of the lodge, the infernal face of Cabrion, with his beard and pointed hat: the hideous rascal was laughing and grinning over my torments. To escape from the odious vision, I closed my eyes; and when I reopened them, all had disappeared, and I found myself upon my chair, with my head uncovered and completely shorn of its honors. You see, sir, that Cabrion, by dint of cunning, obstinate, and unheard-of audacity, has reached his infamous aim: but what horrible instruments has he employed! His design was, to make me pass for his friend; and he commenced by sticking up a sign over my door, informing the public that we carried on a trade of friendship together. Not satisfied with that, my name is this moment joined by an enormous hyphen to his own, on all the walls of the capital: there is not an inhabitant of Paris, that can have any doubt of my intimacy with that reprobate. He wished also for a lock of my hair; and he has got it—yes! the whole of it—by means of the shameless sirens he employed. Now, you see, sir, that nothing is before me but to exile myself from France—my glorious France—where I had always hoped to find a home and a grave!" and Alfred fell back upon his bed and clasped his hands.

* Two dancing girls of the theatre Port Saint Martin, acquaintances of Cabrion, dressed in their ballet costume.

"On the contrary, my old beloved, now that he has got your hair, he will torment you no more."

"Torment me no more!" exclaimed Mr. Pipelet, with a convulsive shudder. "You do not know him: his hostility is insatiable. Who can tell what he will next want of me?"

The appearance of Rigolette at the entrance of the lodge, now terminated the lamentations of Mr. Pipelet.

"Do not come in, Mademoiselle," said Mr. Pipelet, faithful to his sense of decorum: "I am in bed and undressed;" and saying this, he drew the coverlet up to his chin, and the grisette halted discreetly upon the threshold.

"I was just going to see you, my voisine," said Rodolphe. "Be kind enough to wait a moment for me;" and addressing Anastasia, he added: "Do not forget to take Cecile to Mr. Ferrand's this evening."

"Rest contented, my king of tenants. At seven o'clock she will be installed; and as the wife of Morel can walk, I will ask her to keep my lodge; for Alfred would not remain alone for an empire."

CHAPTER XII. ..... VOISIN AND VOISINE.

The rose faded more and more from the cheeks of Rigolette. Her charming face lost its round and oval appearance; and her piquant expression, usually so lively and animated, had become even more serious than it was when she met Fleur de Marie at the prison of Saint Lazare.

"How delighted I am to see you, my voisin!" said Rigolette to Rodolphe, after he had left the lodge of Mr. Pipelet. "I have a thousand things to tell you."

"In the first place, my voisine, how do you do? Let me look into your pretty face. Is it as rosy and lively as ever? Alas! No. I find you pale; and I fear that you work too much."

"No, no, Mr. Rodolphe. I assure you that I have accustomed myself to my slight increase of labor. Nothing but sorrow changes my appearance. Every time I see that poor Germain, I become more and more sad."

"Is he then, very melancholy?"

"More than ever, Mr. Rodolphe; and all my attempts to console him, are counteracted. I am unfortunate;" and a big tear moistened the large black eyes of the grisette.

"Explain yourself, my voisine!"

"Yesterday, for instance, I went to see him, and took with me a book which we read in the happy days of our intimacy, and at the sight of it he melted into tears. It did not surprise me. It was quite natural; for the contrast between his recollections of the evenings which he spent in my pretty little room, by the side of my stove, and the frightful life which he is compelled to lead in prison, was perfectly overpowering. Poor Germain! his fate is a sad one!"

"Cheer up," said Rodolphe to the young girl. "When Germain is released from prison, and his innocence established, he will be restored to his mother and friends, and in their society and yours, he will forget these moments of severe trials."

"Yes; but in the mean time, Mr. Rodolphe, he will be tormented still more; and, besides, this is not all."

"Well; what more is there?"

"As he is the only honest man among those bandits, they hate him, because he cannot possibly associate with them. The keeper of the prison, who is a very excellent man, requested me to persuade Germain, to exhibit less pride, and to try to make himself more familiar with those wicked fellows; but he cannot do it, and I fear some day or other they will do him injury." Then, suddenly interrupting herself, and wiping her tearful eyes, Rigolette continued: "Only see; here I have been thinking of myself alone, and have forgotten to say a word to you about Goualeuse."

"About Goualeuse!" said Rodolphe, with surprise.

"Day before yesterday, when I was going to visit Louise at Saint Lazare, I met her."

"You met Goualeuse?"

"Yes, Mr. Rodolphe."

"What! At Saint Lazare?"

"She was just coming out of there with an old lady."

"It is not possible!" exclaimed Rodolphe, stupefied.

"I assure you it was her, voisin."

"You must have been mistaken."

"No, no. Notwithstanding she was dressed like a peasant girl, I knew her instantly. She is still very pretty, although pale. She retains the melancholy smile and sad look which she formerly had."

"Then she has visited Paris, without my knowledge. I cannot believe it. Why had she been to Saint Lazare?"

"I suppose, like myself, she went to see some prisoner. I

had not time to question her particularly; the old lady who was with her looked so crusty, and appeared to be in such a hurry. But, Mr. Rodolphe, then you know Goualeuse?"

"Certainly, I do."

"Then I am convinced it was you, of whom she spoke to me."

"Of me?"

"Yes, voisin."

"You must know that I was relating to her the misfortunes of Louise and Germain, both so good and so honest, and so outrageously persecuted by that villain, Jacques Ferrand; but I was very careful not to tell her that you took an interest in them. Then Goualeuse said, 'that if a generous person of her acquaintance, only knew the unhappy and unmerited fate of my poor prisoners, he would certainly come to their assistance.' Iasked her what was the name of that person, and she mentioned your name, Mr. Rodolphe."

"It is her: it must be her."

"You must suppose that we were both much astonished at the discovery, or at the resemblance of names. We therefore promised each other, to write whether our Rodolphes were the same; and it seems that you are the one, voisin."

"Yes, I have taken an interest in that poor child; but what you say about her presence in Paris so much surprises me, that if you had not given me so many details of your interview with her, I should have persisted in believing that you were mistaken. But good-bye, voisine; what you have just informed me about Goualeuse, compels me to leave you. Continue to remain silent before Louise and Germain, concerning the protection which they may expect when the proper moment has arrived. Such silence is more important than ever. By the way, how are the Morels?"

"Better and better, Mr. Rodolphe; the mother has entirely recovered; the children's health is improving very fast; the whole family owes their life and happiness to you—so generous have you been to them. But poor Morel, how is he?"

"Better; I have heard from him at times; he appears to have some lucid moments, and there is reason to hope that he will be cured of his insanity. Have courage, my voisine, and all will soon be right. Have you need of anything? Do the profits of your labor supply all your wants?"

"Oh yes, Mr. Rodolphe. It is true, I am compelled to encroach a little upon my night's rest, but it is of no importance; I sleep scarcely any."

"Alas! my poor voisine, I fear that father Cretu and Ramonette, will sing but little, since you wait for them to begin."

"You do not deceive yourself, Mr. Rodolphe; neither my birds nor myself sing now. Good Heavens! no; but you must not laugh, when I tell you that they appear to observe that I am sad. Instead of chirping as they formerly did, when I entered the room, they utter a warbling so sweet and so plaintive, that it seems as if they wished to console me. But how nonsensical it is for me to think so; is it not, Mr. Rodolphe?"

"By no means; for I am sure that such good friends as your birds, sympathize too closely with you not to be alive to your grief."

"Yes, it is true, the little creatures are very intelligent," said Rigolette, innocently; happy in being convinced of the sagacity of the feathered companions of her solitude.

"Nothing is more intelligent than gratitude. But farewell, my voisine; before long, I hope your beautiful eyes will sparkle, and your cheeks be as rosy as formerly; and you will sing so cheerfully, that father Cretu and Ramonette will have difficulty in bearing their burden of the chorus."

"Are you really sincere, Mr. Rodolphe?" asked Rigolette, with a deep-drawn sigh. "Well, farewell, my voisin."

"Farewell for a short time."

Rodolphe could not understand why Madam George, without notifying him, had allowed Fleur de Marie to come to Paris. He therefore immediately returned to his residence, for the purpose of dispatching an express to Bouqueval farm. At the moment he entered the rue Plumet, he saw a post-coach drawn up before the door of the hotel. It was Murph, who had returned from Normandy. He had gone there, for the purpose of unmasking the sinister designs of the Countess d'Orbigny, and of Bradamanti, her accomplice.

CHAPTER XIII..... MURPH AND POLIDORI.

THE face of Sir Walter Murph was radiant with joy, and on descending from the carriage, he gave to one of the attendants of the Prince a pair of pistols, and threw aside his long riding-coat; and without waiting to change his garments, he followed Rodolphe, who impatiently preceded him to his apartment.

"Good news, my lord, good news," eagerly exclaimed the squire, when he found himself alone with Rodolphe. "The wretches are unmasked—the Count d'Orbigny is saved; you dispatched me at the very moment: in one hour later, a new crime would have been committed."

"How is the Marchioness d'Harville?"

"She is all joy at the restoration of her father's affection, and all happiness in having arrived in conformity to your advice, in sufficient time to rescue him from inevitable death."

"And what have you to say of Polidori?"

"He was again the worthy accomplice of the Marchioness's stepmother. But what an infamous woman is she! what coolness, what audacity! and as for that Polidori, alas! my lord, you have sometimes been so condescending as to thank me for what you have called the proofs of my devotion——"

"I have always denominated them proofs of friendship, my good Murph."

"True, my lord, true; but this friendship has never been put to such severe tests, as of late," said Murph, in a half-jesting spirit.

"What do you mean?"

"The disguise of a coal-heaver; the peregrinations in the Cité, were nothing—absolutely nothing, my lord, in comparison with the trip I have just completed with this infernal Polidori."

"What do you say? Polidori!"

"I have brought him with me."

"With you?"

"With me: what a companion! During twelve hours, to be chained to the side of the man I despise and hate beyond all mortals. I would rather travel with a viper or the beast, which I hold in the greatest antipathy."

"Where is Polidori now?"

"In the house of the alley of Veuves, securely guarded."

"Has he then made no resistance, for the purpose of saving himself?"

"None. I left him the choice of either being arrested by the French authorities, or conducted as my prisoner to the alley of Veuves. He did not hesitate."

"You were right; it is much better to have him in our own hands. You are a perfect treasure, my old Murph; but detail to me the incidents of your trip. I am anxious to know how this unworthy woman, and her infamous accomplice, were finally unmasked."

"Nothing was more simple: I had only to follow your instructions to the letter, in order to terrify and overwhelm those wretches. In this affair, my lord, you have, as you ever do, saved the worthy, and chastised the wicked—the noble protector that you are."

"Sir Walter, Sir Walter! do you remember the Baron de Graün's flatteries?" said Rodolphe, with a smile.

"Be it so, my lord: I will commence. But perhaps you would first prefer to read this letter of the Marchioness d'Harville, which will inform you of all that transpired before my arrival dismayed Polidori."

"A letter! give it to me, quickly."

Murph, placing the letter of the Marchioness in the hands of Rodolphe, added: "As it was the most convenient, instead of accompanying the Marchioness to her father's, I went to the tavern, a few steps from the chateau, and waited until the Marchioness should command my services."

Rodolphe perused what follows with tender and anxious solicitude:

"MY LORD:

"In addition to all your other claims upon my gratitude, I am now indebted to you for the life of my father. I hasten to relate the facts; they will express to you the additional treasures of thankfulness toward you, which have accumulated in my heart. Impressed with the importance of the advice you communicated to me, through Sir Walter Murph, who joined me on the road to Normandy, I hastened my journey to the chateau of Aubiers. I do not know why, but the features of all the servants who received me, appeared ominous. I saw among them none of the ancient domestics of our house; no one knew me; no one recognized me. I was obliged to announce myself; and I learned that for a few hours previously, my father had suffered severely, and that my stepmother had brought to his relief, a physician from Paris. I had no doubt that it was Doctor Polidori. Desirous of being immediately conducted to my father, I inquired for the old valet de chambre, to whom he was greatly attached; and I learned that the servant had been for some time discharged. This information was given me by the steward, who conducted me to

my apartment, saying that he would inform my stepmother of my arrival. Was this an illusion? a presentiment? for it seemed to me that my arrival was troublesome to my father's servants. Everything in the chateau appeared to me sad and ominous. In the disposition of mind in which I found myself, I sought to draw inferences from the most insignificant circumstances. I remarked every indication of carelessness and disorder, as if it was regarded as superfluous to arrange a habitation which was so soon to be abandoned. My alarm and anguish increased every instant. After having established my daughter and my governess in my own apartment, I was about to seek my father, when my stepmother entered. Notwithstanding her powers of dissimulation and self-control, she appeared confused at my sudden arrival. 'The Count did not expect a visit from you,' said she; 'he is so low, that such a surprise might prove fatal. I have, therefore, thought it proper to leave him in ignorance of your arrival. He would be unable to understand it, and——' I did not allow her to conclude the sentence. 'A great misfortune has occurred, madam,' said I; 'the Marquis d'Harville is dead—a victim of a fatal imprudence. After such a melancholy event I could no longer remain in my residence at Paris, and I have come to pass with my father the first days of my mourning.' 'Are you a widow? that is a provoking piece of good fortune!' said my enraged stepmother. After being made acquainted with the marriage into which the revengeful nature of this woman drew me, you will understand, my lord, the atrocity of this exclamation.

"'It is for the purpose of averting a similar piece of good fortune from yourself, madam, that I have visited this chateau,' said I, imprudently. 'I wish to see my father.' 'At present, that is impossible,' said she, turning pale; 'the sight of you might produce a dangerous relapse.' 'Since my father is so seriously ill,' I exclaimed, 'why was not I informed of it?' 'The Count d'Orbigny did not desire it.' 'I do not believe you, madam; and I shall immediately go to him, for the purpose of ascertaining the truth,' said I, advancing toward the door of my father's apartment.

"'I repeat to you, that your unexpected appearance might be productive of terrible consequences,' said she, placing herself before me, in order to oppose my passage. 'I cannot permit you to enter his apartment, until I have first informed him of your arrival, with all the precaution which his situation demands.' I was placed in a cruel perplexity, my lord. A sudden surprise might actually have been very dangerous to my father; but that woman, usually so calm, so collected, appeared to be so much frightened by my presence; I had so many reasons for doubting the sincerity of her solicitude for the health of him whom she had married from cupidity; and, finally, the presence of Doctor Polidori, the murderer of my mother, caused me so much alarm, that, thinking that the life of my father was jeopardied, I did not hesitate between the hope of saving him, and the fear of exciting dangerous emotions.

"'I must instantly see my father!' said I to my stepmother; and, although she had seized my arm, I passed on. The woman, losing her temper, again attempted forcibly to prevent my leaving the room. Her astonishing resistance redoubled my fears. I released myself from her grasp; knowing where my father's apartment was, I ran to it in haste, and entered it. Oh! my lord! Never in my life shall I forget the scene that was presented to my sight. I could scarcely recognize my father! pale, thin, and suffering delineated upon every feature; with his head resting upon a pillow, he was reclining in an easy chair. At the corner of the fireplace, standing near him, was the Doctor Polidori, who was in the act of pouring into a cup, held by a nurse, a few drops of liquid, contained in a small crystal flagon, which he had in his hand. His long, red beard, gave to his countenance a most forbidding expression. I entered the room with such precipitation, that the doctor made a motion of surprise; exchanged a significant look with my stepmother, who was hastily following me, and, instead of giving to my father the potion which he had prepared for him, he quickly placed the flacon upon the mantelpiece. Guided by an unaccountable instinct, my first movement was to seize the flacon. Observing the surprise and alarm of both my stepmother and Polidori, I congratulated myself upon my presence of mind. My stepmother was stupefied, and seemed angry at my presence. I expected it. Polidori cast upon me a ferocious look; and, notwithstanding the presence of my father, and that of the nurse, I feared that the miserable wretch, seeing that his crime was almost discovered, would resort to extremities against me. Feeling the necessity of some assistance, in such an important moment, I rang the bell; and when one of my father's servants made his appearance, I requested him to command my valet, who had already been instructed, to bring some articles which I had left at the tavern. Sir Walter Murph knew, that in order not to awaken the suspicions of my stepmother, in case I should be obliged to give my orders in her presence, that I would resort to that subterfuge to secure his presence. The surprise of my father and stepmother was such, that the servant had time to leave the room before they could open their lips. I felt less anxious, knowing that Sir Walter Murph would soon be by my side.

"'What is the meaning of all this? You here, Clemence?' said my father, in a feeble and angry tone of voice. 'You here, Clemence, without my sending for you, and taking possession of the flacon which contains the potion which the doctor was about administering to me? Will you explain to me such singular conduct?' 'Leave the room,' said my stepmother to the nurse. The woman obeyed.

"'Be calm, my friend,' said my stepmother, addressing my father. 'You know that the least excitement might prove injurious to you. Since your daughter has come here, regardless of your wishes, and her presence is disagreeable to you, give me your arm and I will conduct you into the small parlor; and in the meanwhile our good doctor will explain to the Marchioness, how imprudent her conduct is, to use no harsher term;' and she cast upon her accomplice a significant look. I comprehended my stepmother's motive. She wished to separate me from my father, and leave me alone with Polidori; who, under these extreme circumstances, would not have hesitated in using violence, for the purpose of depriving me of the flagon which contained the conclusive evidence of his criminal designs.

'You are right,' said my father to my stepmother. 'Since I am pursued, even into my own house, regardless of my wishes, I will make room for one so officious;' and rising, with exertion, he accepted the arm which my stepmother offered him, and advanced a few steps toward the small parlor. At the same moment, Polidori approached me; but I, advancing toward my father, remarked to him:

"'I am about to explain to you, the reason of my unexpected arrival, and why my conduct is apparently so strange. No later than yesterday I became a widow; and since then, I have learned that your life is in jeopardy, my father!'

"He was walking in a bent attitude, that was evidently painful to him; but at these words, he halted suddenly, and erecting himself, he exclaimed, while looking at me with deep astonishment: 'You a widow? my life in jeopardy! What is the meaning of all this?' 'And who dares to threaten the life of M. d'Orbigny, madam?' asked my stepmother, audaciously. 'Who threatens his life?' added Polidori.' 'You, sir! you, madam!' I replied.' 'What a horrible idea!' exclaimed my stepmother, advancing one step toward me.' 'I will prove my assertion, madam!' I replied to her. 'What a terrible accusation!' exclaimed my father. 'Since I am exposed to such base calumnies, I will leave this house instantly!' said Doctor Polidori, with the indignation of a man whose honor was apparently wounded. Beginning to feel alarmed at his dangerous position, he undoubtedly desired to escape. At the moment of opening the door, he found himself face to face with Sir Walter Murph.

"Polidori was petrified at this unexpected appearance, and my stepmother was plunged in still deeper surprise. My father, agitated by this scene, and weakened by disease, was obliged to seat himself in a fauteuil. Sir Walter locked the door through which he had entered, and placing himself before one which led to another apartment, so that the doctor might not escape, he said to my poor father, with an accent of most profound respect, 'Pardon me, Count, for the liberty which I have taken: an imperious necessity, which was forced upon me by a desire of promoting your welfare, obliges me to act in this manner. My name is Sir Walter Murph, as the reprobate who trembles by my side can vouch. I am the confidential friend of His Royal Highness, the reigning Grand Duke of Gerolstein.'

"'It is true,' said Doctor Polidori, stammering, and shaking with fear. 'But for what purpose are you here?' asked my father. 'Sir Walter Murph is here to assist me,' said I to my father, 'in unmasking the wretches, of whom you were almost the victim.' Then, giving Sir Walter the crystal flacon, I added, 'I was inspired with the happy thought of seizing this flacon at the very moment when Doctor Polidori was about to administer a portion of it to my father.' 'A chemist from a neighboring city will analyze in your presence the contents of this flacon, which I will now deposit in your own hands, Count d'Orbigny; and if it can be proved that it contains a slow and sure poison,' said Sir Walter to my father, 'you will then entertain no doubt of the peril to which you were exposed, and which the affection of the Marchioness, your daughter, has fortunately counteracted.'

"My unfortunate father glanced successively at his wife, Doctor Polidori, myself, and Sir Walter Murph, with a distracted

air. His features expressed indescribable anguish. I could read upon his wild countenance the violent struggle which was raging in his heart. He undoubtedly resisted, with all his strength, the rapidly increasing suspicions, reluctant to admit the guilt of my stepmother; but finally, hiding his face in his hands, he exclaimed, 'Great God! great God! all this is too horrible to be believed, and I am dreaming!'

"'No! it is not a dream!' exclaimed my stepmother, audaciously. 'Nothing can be more real than this atrocious and premeditated calumny, in order to ruin an unfortunate woman, whose only crime has been the consecration of her life to you! Come, come, my friend; let us not remain here a second longer,' added she, addressing my father: 'perhaps your daughter will not be so insolent as to force you to remain here against your will?' 'Yes, yes; let us depart!' said my father, in excessive agitation; 'this awful disclosure cannot be true. I will hear no more of it: my reason could not stand the shock! Frightful suspicions might be excited in my mind, and poison the few days which I have to live. Nothing, nothing, could alleviate such a terrible discovery!'

"My father seemed to be in such a disturbed state of mind, that I wished, at any rate, to terminate a scene so painful to him. Sir Walter divined my intentions, but, desirous of exhibiting impartial justice, he said to my father, 'A few words more, and you will have to admit the afflicting truth, that a woman, whom you have supposed bound to you by the firmest ties of gratitude, has always been a hypocritical monster! You, however, have the most delightful consolation, in the affection of your daughter, who has never, for an instant, wavered in her devotion and fidelity to you.' 'This passes beyond all limits!' exclaimed my stepmother, in a rage; 'upon what proofs do you base such awful calumnies? Do you say that this flacon contains poison? I deny it, sir! and will deny it, until proof is produced; and even if Doctor Polidori should have made some mistake in the potion he was about to administer, is that sufficient evidence to sanction an accusation against me of having attempted—of having connived with him—— No! no! I will not finish the sentence: such a horrible thought is itself a crime! Once more, sir, I defy you to present the proofs upon which you found this infamous accusation!' said my stepmother, with incredible audacity. 'Yes; upon what proofs do you rely? the torture which I suffer must be brought to an end,' added my father.

"'I have not presented myself here without proofs, Count d'Orbigny,' said Sir Walter; 'and these proofs will be furnished to you instantly, by the answers of this infamous man;' and Sir Walter addressed Polidori in German, who had partially recovered his assurance, but lost it again immediately.'

"What did you say to him, Murph?" asked Rodolphe of the Squire, ceasing to read.

"A few significant words, my lord; something like these: 'You have escaped by flight, from your condemnation in the Grand Duchy; you live in the rue du Temple, under the assumed name of Bradamanti; your abominable practices are well known; you poisoned the first wife of the Count. Three days since the Countess d'Orbigny invoked your aid to poison her husband. His Royal Highness possesses the evidence of every statement which I have made. If you confess the truth, in order to convict this wretched woman, you may hope, not for pardon, but for some mitigation of the punishment to which you have exposed yourself. You will follow me to Paris, where I will place you in a secure position, until His Royal Highness shall have decided concerning you. If you refuse, one of two things awaits you: His Royal Highness will either demand your surrender, or I shall instantly send for a magistrate to the nearest city; and I will place this flacon, containing poison, in his hands, and have you arrested on the spot. Your rooms in the rue du Temple will be searched; and you know yourself, what evidence that examination will bring to light; and French justice will be left to follow its course. Choose between these alternatives.' These disclosures, accusations, and threats, which he knew to be true, following each other in such close succession, confounded the infamous man, who hardly expected to find me so well informed. In the hope of having his punishment mitigated, he did not hesitate to sacrifice his accomplice, and he replied to me: 'Address what questions you please, and I will tell the truth concerning this woman.'"

"Excellent—excellent! my worthy Murph. I expected no less from you."

"During my conversation with Polidori, the countenance of the stepmother of the Marchioness changed most frightfully. Although she did not understand German, she perceived, by the increasing depression of her confederate, and by his supplicating attitude, that I had him in my power. With the greatest anxiety, she sought to catch the eye of Polidori, in order to inspire him with courage, or to implore his discretion; but he obstinately refused to encounter her look."

"What said the Count?"

"His emotions cannot be described. With convulsive fingers he grasped the arms of his chair; the perspiration rolled from his forehead; his anxious and fixed eyes did not leave mine; his anguish was equal to that of his wife. The sequel of the Marchioness d'Harville's letter will inform you of the termination of this painful scene, my lord."

CHAPTER XIV..... THE PUNISHMENT.

Rodolphe continued the perusal of the Marchioness d'Harville's letter:

"After a short conversation in the German language between Sir Walter Murph and Polidori, Sir Walter remarked to the latter: 'Answer me; was it not Madam d'Orbigny,' and he pointed to my stepmother, 'who, during the illness of the Count's first wife, introduced you to him as a physician?' 'Yes; it was her,' answered Polidori. 'With the view of serving her horrible purposes, were you not sufficiently criminal to render mortal, by your murderous prescriptions, the illness of the Countess d'Orbigny, which at first was but a slight malady?' 'Yes,' replied Polidori. My father uttered an afflicting groan, raised his hands to Heaven, and let them fall again in a desponding manner. 'Infamous lies!' cried my stepmother. "It is all a falsehood, intended for my ruin.' 'Silence! madam,' said Sir Walter Murph, in a dignified tone; and then he continued, addressing Polidori: 'Is it true, that three days ago Madam d'Orbigny went in search of you in the rue du Temple, No. 17, where you lived concealed, under the fictitious name of Bradamanti?' 'That is true.' 'Did she not propose to you to come here, for the purpose of assassinating the Count d'Orbigny, as you had already assassinated his wife?' 'Alas! I cannot deny it,' said Polidori.

"At this overwhelming revelation, my father raised himself into a threatening attitude, and, with an overpowering gesture, he motioned my stepmother to the door; then extending his arms to me, he cried, in a faltering voice: 'In the name of your unfortunate mother, pardon me—pardon me! I was the cause of great suffering to her; but I swear to you, that I was ignorant of the crime that hurried her to the grave;' and before I could prevent him, my father fell upon his knees. When Sir Walter and myself raised him, he had fainted. I rang for the servants. Sir Walter took Doctor Polidori by the arm and went out with him, saying to my stepmother: 'Take my advice, madam; before another hour has passed, quit this house, or else I shall deliver you to justice.' The wretch quitted the apartment, in a state of fear and anger that you may easily imagine, my lord.

"When my father recovered his senses, all that had occurred appeared to him like an awful dream. I was under the unfortunate necessity of relating to him my first suspicions respecting the sudden death of my mother—suspicions which your knowledge of Polidori had changed into convictions. I was also obliged to inform my father of the manner in which my stepmother had persecuted me, and her intentions and aim in promoting my marriage with the Marquis d'Harville. In the same degree that my father had formerly showed himself blind and weak toward this woman, he now wished to show himself merciless. He accused himself, with emotions of despair, of having virtually participated in the crime of this woman, by giving her his hand in marriage, after the murder of my mother. He wished to surrender Madam d'Orbigny to justice. I represented to him the scandal which such a proceeding would excite, and the talk about which would be so distressing to him. I urged him to expel the woman for ever from his presence, securing to her a sum which was sufficient to support her, since she bore his name. I found great difficulty in obtaining from my father these moderate demands; and he charged me with expelling her from the house. As this commission was exceedingly painful for me to discharge, I thought that Sir Walter would relieve me from the task. He consented to do it."

"Certainly, I consented with joy, my lord," said Murph. "I delight to administer extreme unction to the wicked."

"And what did that woman say?"

"The Marchioness had been so exceedingly kind, as to solicit from her father a pension of one hundred louis for that infamous woman. That seemed to me not kindness, but weakness. It was wrong to rob justice of such a dangerous criminal. I went to see the Count, and he adopted fully my suggestions. It was agreed that he would give twenty-five louis to the wretch, in order to provide her with sustenance until she could obtain some

employment. 'And what labor can I, the Countess d'Orbigny, employ myself about?' she asked of me, impudently. 'That is your own business, madam,' I replied; 'perhaps you can employ yourself as a nurse or governess. But I advise you to select the humblest and most obscure occupation, for if you have the audacity to tell your name—the name for which you are indebted to your crime, people would be astonished to see the Countess d'Orbigny reduced to such an extremity; they would institute inquiries, and you can judge of the consequences to yourself of reviving the past. Conceal yourself in some remote retreat, endeavor to be forgotten, become Madam Pierre or Madam Jacques, and repent if you can.' 'And do you think, sir,' said she, having probably premeditated this theatrical effect—'do you think, sir, that I shall not demand the rights which my marriage contract secures to me?' 'Truly, madam, nothing could be more unjust; it would be unworthy of the Count d'Orbigny to forget his promises, and not to recompense you for all that you have done, and all that you wish to do for him. Institute a suit, madam, address yourself to justice; I have no doubt it will settle your claims against your husband.' A quarter of an hour after our conversation, the vile wretch was on her way to the nearest town."

"You are right; it is painful to release unpunished such an infamous Megara: but the scandal of a lawsuit for that feeble old man, could not be endured."

"I readily prevailed upon my father to leave Aubiers this very day," said Rodolphe, continuing to peruse the Marchioness's letter. "Should he remain here, he would be tortured by too many distressing recollections. 'Although his health is delicate, a journey of a few days and a change of air, would prove serviceable to him,' said the physician, who had taken Polidori's place, and whom I had summoned from the nearest town. My father desired him to analyze the contents of the flagon, without mentioning to him what had taken place. The physician replied that he could not perform the process except at his own house, and that within two hours he would inform us of the result of the analysis. He soon told us that a few doses of that liquid, prepared with infernal art, would produce death, leaving no traces behind it but the symptoms of some disease which the physician named.

"Within a few hours, my lord, I intend to start with my father and my daughter for Fontainebleau; we shall remain there for some time, and then, if my father desires it, we will return to Paris, but not to the hotel d'Harville; it would be impossible for me to live there after the deplorable accident which has occurred. As I told you, my lord, at the commencement of this letter, the facts prove my overpowering obligations to your inexhaustible solicitude. Aided by your advice, sustained and protected by the support of your excellent and courageous Sir Walter, it has been my happiness to rescue my father from extreme peril; and I have also been gratified with the conviction that his affection is completely restored to me. Farewell, my lord; it is impossible for me to tell you more, my heart is to full; too many emotions agitate it, and it would be impossible to express all that I feel. D'ORBIGNY D'HARVILLE."

"I reopen this letter, my lord, to remedy a forgetfulness of which I am ashamed. Acting under your noble advice, to search for some charitable occupation, I went to Saint Lazare, to visit the unfortunate prisoners there. I found in prison a poor child in whom you have taken some interest. Her angelic mildness, her gentleness and pious resignation have excited the admiration of the worthy matron of that establishment. By informing you where Gonaleuse is—such, I believe, is her name—is to ask you immediately to secure her release. The unfortunate child will inform you by what a terrible train of circumstances she was dragged from the asylum in which you placed her, where at least the excellence of her character has been appreciated. Permit me also, to remind you, my lord, of my two future protoges, the unhappy mother and her daughter who have been ruined by Ferrand, the notary. Where are they? Have you learned anything concerning them? I beseech you to attempt to find them, that I may pay to them, on my return to Paris, the debt which I have contracted toward all the unfortunate."

"Gonaleuse has then left the farm Bonqueval, my lord?" said Murph, as much astonished as Rodolphe, at this new revelation.

"I was told, but a moment since, that she was seen leaving Saint Lazare," replied Rodolphe. "I know not what to think of it; the silence of Madam George* confounds me, and fills me with anxiety. Poor little Fleur de Marie! what new misfortune has befallen her! Command a courier to hasten to the farm, and inform Madam George that I wish her immediately to come to Paris. Tell Baron de Graün to obtain for me a permit to enter Saint Lazare. From what the Marchioness informs me, Fleur de Marie must be imprisoned there. But no: she can be no longer a prisoner there," continued Rodolphe, after reflection, "for Rigolette saw her leave the prison, under the protection of an aged woman. Could it be Madam George? if not, who could that woman be, and where has Gonaleuse gone?"

"Patience, my lord; by this evening, you will learn the results of our inquiries. To-morrow, you must interrogate that infamous Polidori; he says that he has important disclosures to make to you, but to you alone."

"The interview will be odious to me, for I have not seen that man since the fatal day—when I——" Rodolphe could not finish the sentence: he concealed his face with his hands.

"But why, my lord, should you grant Polidori's request? Threaten him with the criminal laws of France, or with demanding his immediate surrender, and he will be compelled to disclose to me what he wished to reveal only to yourself."

"You are right, my dear friend; the presence of that wretch would render more distressing those terrible recollections, to which so many incurable sorrows have attached themselves, from the death of my father to the death of my poor little girl. I know not why, but the further I advance in life, the more I suffer from the loss of my child. How much I should have loved her! how dear to me would have been the offspring of my first love—of my first pure confidence, or rather of my young illusions. I would have lavished upon that innocent creature, those treasures of affection of which her odious mother is unworthy. And then it seems to me that the child, such as I imagine her to be, by the purity of her soul, the excellence of her qualities, would have subdued the remorse which is connected, alas! with her fatal birth."

"My lord, I observe with pain the increasing influence which these fruitless regrets exercise over your mind."

After a few moments' pause, Rodolphe said to Murph:

"I am now able, my old friend, to open my heart to you. I love—I love profoundly and ardently, a woman who is worthy of the most elevated, the most devoted affection. And it is since my heart has opened afresh to the delights of love, it is since my mind has been predisposed to tender emotions, that I feel most acutely the loss of my daughter. I had reason to fear that an attachment might diminish the bitterness of my regrets; but, on the contrary, it has been the means of stimulating all my generous impulses. I feel that I am more kind, more charitable, and more than ever afflicted that I have now no daughter upon whom I can lavish my love."

"It is perfectly natural, my lord; and if you will excuse the comparison, I would say, that as wine developes the noblest attributes of some minds, in the same manner love awakens in your soul its most elevated instincts."

"And yet my hatred to the wicked has redoubled: my aversion to Sarah has increased, owing, doubtless, to my sorrow for the loss of my daughter. I fear that the heartless mother neglected her; that, finding her ambitious hopes destroyed by my marriage, the Countess, in her merciless selfishness, abandoned our child to mercenary hands, and that my daughter perhaps expired from neglect. I am to blame, also: I did not perceive then the sacred obligations which paternity imposes. When I discovered the real character of Sarah, I should have instantly taken my daughter from her hands, and watched over her with all the solicitude of love. I should have foreseen, that the Countess would always prove an unnatural mother. I am to blame—yes! I am to blame!"

"My lord, your grief obscures the usual clearness of your understanding. How was it possible! After the fatal event which is too deeply impressed upon your heart, how could you postpone the long journey which was imposed upon you as——"

"As an expiation," said Rodolphe, in a desponding tone.

"Have you heard anything from the Countess Sarah since my departure, my lord?"

"Since her infamous denunciations, which were twice on the eve of ruining the Marchioness d'Harville, I have not heard from her. Her residence in this city distresses me: it seems to me that my evil genius is near me, and that some new misfortune awaits me."

"Patience, patience! my lord. Fortunately, Germany is forbidden to her, and Germany is waiting for us."

"Yes; we will soon depart for home. At least, during my short residence in Paris, I have the consciousness of having fulfilled a sacred promise. I shall have advanced a few steps farther in that meritorious path, which a merciful Providence seems to have marked out for my redemption. As soon as the son of Madam George is restored to her bosom, innocent and

* The reader will recollect that the anxiety of Madam George had been lulled by an emissary of Sarah, who had informed her that Fleur de Marie had been removed from the farm, by the orders of the Prince, and she accordingly daily anticipated her return.

free; as soon as Jacques Ferrand shall be convicted and punished for his crimes; as soon as I shall have secured comfort for the future to all the honest and laborious creatures who have claims upon my charity, we will return to Germany; and my journey will not have proved fruitless."

"Especially, my lord, if you could unmask that abominable Jacques Ferrand, the prime cause and main-spring of so many crimes."

"Although the end, in this case, will justify the means, and no scruples should interfere with the course of retributive justice, I at times regret the necessity which compels me to adopt Cecile as an indispensable instrument of vengeance."

"Will she soon arrive?"

"She has already arrived."

"Cecile?"

"Yes. I was unwilling to see her; but de Graün has given her minute instructions, and she has promised to follow them."

"Will she keep her promise?"

"She has every inducement to do so: the hope of future relief, and the fear of being immediately restored to her prison; for de Graün will not lose sight of her, and the least misconduct will be the signal for returning her to captivity."

"You are correct in your views. She has come here as an escaped convict; and when the crimes she has committed are disclosed to the authorities, they will immediately surrender her to your ministers of justice."

"And even were she not induced by her own interest to advance our projects, the task imposed upon her, calling for the exertion of cunning, perfidy, and all those diabolical arts in which she delights, will gratify her with the opportunity for displaying the detestable talents with which she is endowed."

"Does she still retain her beauty, my lord?"

"De Graün pronounces her more fascinating than ever: he was even himself dazzled by charms, which were admirably displayed by the Alsatian costume which she had selected. The eye of the siren has the same magical effect upon every one."

"I never was much of a dissipated youth, my lord; but if, at the age of twenty, I had met Cecile, even with all my present convictions of her wicked and perverse disposition, I would not have answered for my own firmness, had I been for a long time exposed to the fascinating power of her large fiery eyes, which glance from her pale and passionate face. I dare not conjecture whither I should have been drawn by her fatal influence."

"I am not surprised at your observations, my worthy Murph, for I am thoroughly acquainted with that woman. The Baron, moreover, was perfectly astonished with the appreciating manner in which she entered into the part, at the same time *enticing* and *platonic*, which we expect her to play in the house of the notary."

"But can she be introduced into his service as easily as you anticipated, my lord, by means of Madam Pipelet's intervention? Men of Jacques Ferrand's character are proverbially suspicious."

"I was not disappointed in my expectation, that the charms of Cecile would appeal to the only passion in Jacques Ferrand's character, which has sufficient power to overcome his habitual craft, and lull his suspicious disposition."

"Has he already seen her?"

"He saw her yesterday. From Madam Pipelet's version of the interview, I have no doubt that the Creole has already produced the impression which we anticipated, for he immediately received her into his service."

"The game seems to be in our own hands, my lord."

"I hope so. A ferocious cupidity and a savage lust, have led the inhuman seducer of Louise to the perpetration of crimes the most awful which the imagination can conceive; and it is only by means of that lust and that cupidity, that we can inflict condign punishment upon a wretch, whose infernal arts set at defiance all the ordinary forms of justice—a punishment which will be the means of saving the victims he has almost destroyed. You are well aware to what particular object, the efforts of the Creole must be directed?"

"Cecile! Cecile! Never was more excessive wickedness, a more dangerous corruption, or a blacker soul, employed for the accomplishment of an object of higher morality, or on which more important interests, more sacred rights, depended. And what says David, my lord?"

"He approves of the means which we have adopted. His contempt and horror of the woman is so great, that he is pleased that her infamous qualities can in any way be made serviceable for the ends of justice. 'If that wretch,' he said, 'could deserve the least commiseration, after all the sufferings I have experienced from her, it can only be by becoming the avenging fury of a villain, who deserves all that punishment can inflict.'"

An usher having knocked lightly at the door, Murph went out for a moment and soon returned, bringing with him two letters, one of which was for Rodolphe.

"It is a letter from Madam George," said he, reading it rapidly.

"What has become of Goualeuse?"

"No doubt remains," exclaimed Rodolphe, after having read the letter, "that some dark conspiracy has been devised. On the very evening the poor child disappeared from the farm—at the very moment Madam George was about to dispatch a messenger to inform me of that event; a man whom she did not know, pretending that he was a messenger from me, came to relieve her anxiety, by stating that I was acquainted with the sudden disappearance of Fleur de Marie, and that I would return with her to the farm in a few days. With all these explanations, Madam George, anxious concerning her protége, cannot resist the desire, as she informs me, of inquiring concerning the welfare of her beloved daughter, as she calls the poor child."

"It is very singular, my lord."

"But what motive could any one have in abducting Fleur de Marie?"

"My lord, the Countess Sarah is no stranger to this abduction."

"Sarah! What directs your suspicions to her?"

"Take into consideration this abduction, in connection with her denunciation of the Marchioness d'Harville."

"You are right," said Rodolphe, struck by a sudden conjecture. "It is quite evident to me now, that her calculating spirit has been employed in it. The Countess persists in hoping that if she breaks all the ties of affection which fasten around my heart; she will force me to resort to her for consolation. The thought is both odious and absurd. I must put an end to her base persecutions. She not only attacks me, but all those who interest either my respect or my compassion. You must instantly dispatch de Graün officially to the Countess, and he must declare to her, that I have positive evidence of her instrumentality in Fleur de Marie's abduction; and that if she does not afford me all the information which is necessary to discover again that unhappy child, I shall show her no mercy, but shall instruct de Graün to apply to the civil authorities."

"From the letter of the Marchioness, it would appear that Goualeuse was confined in Saint Lazare."

"But Rigolette affirms, that she saw her released from that prison. There is some mystery which must be cleared up."

"I will instantly give your orders to the Baron de Graün, my lord. But permit me first to open this letter; it comes from my correspondent at Marseilles, to whom I recommended Chourineur. He was to engage a passage for that poor fellow to Algeria."

"Has he gone?"

"This is very singular, my lord."

"What is the matter?"

"After having waited a long time at Marseilles, for a vessel to start for Algeria, Chourineur, who daily became more depressed and thoughtful, expressed his determination, upon the very day appointed for his embarkation, to return to Paris."

"What surprising conduct!"

"Although my correspondent had placed a large sum in the hands of Chourineur, he only retained a sufficient amount, with which to return to Paris, where he must shortly arrive."

"He will explain to us, in person, the reason why he has changed his determination. But let de Graün immediately go to the Countess McGregor and hasten yourself to Saint Lazare, to inquire respecting Fleur de Marie."

. . . . . .

After an interval of an hour, the Baron de Graün returned from the Countess McGregor. Notwithstanding his habitual phlegm, the diplomate was in an unusual state of agitation. The usher had hardly introduced him, before Rodolphe was struck with his pallor.

"What is the matter with you, de Graün? Have you seen the Countess?"

"Alas! my lord."

"What distresses you?"

"Your royal Highness must excuse me from breaking too suddenly to you, so unexpected a calamity."

"Is the Countess dead?"

"No, my lord; but her life is despaired of. She has been stabbed with a poniard."

"It is indeed awful!" exclaimed Rodolphe, moved with compassion, in spite of his aversion to Sarah. "Who committed the crime?"

"It is not known, my lord; the attempt at murder was for the purpose of robbery. Some one broke into the apartment of the Countess, and after committing the crime, disappeared with all her valuable jewels."

"And how is the Countess now?"

"Her situation is almost desperate, my lord; she has not yet recovered her senses; and her brother is in consternation."

"You must make inquiries every day respecting the health of the Countess, my dear de Graün."

Murph now returned from Saint Lazare.

"We have more bad news," said Rodolphe to him. "The Countess Sarah has just been stabbed, and her life is in the greatest danger."

"Her fate deserves commiseration, even from those who have suffered the most from her culpable conduct."

"Such a death would be indeed awful! What have you learned respecting Goualeuse?"

"She was released yesterday, my lord, through the intervention of the Marchioness d'Harville, it is supposed, at the prison."

"That is impossible! for the Marchioness, on the contrary, requests me to take the necessary steps to secure the discharge of the poor child."

"That is undoubtedly true! but an aged woman of respectable appearance, presented herself at Saint Lazare, bringing with her an order for the release of Fleur de Marie; and they both left the prison together."

"That coincides with the information of Rigolette. But who can the aged woman be who accompanied Fleur de Marie? Where did they go together? What is this new mystery? The Countess Sarah alone can throw light upon it; and her situation is such, that she cannot now give any information. It is to be hoped that she will not carry the secret with her to the grave."

"But her brother, Thomas Seyton, might furnish some information, for he has always been the counsellor of the Countess."

"His sister is dying; some new plot is in the process of development, and he will not open his lips."

"We can learn the name of the person who procured the release of Fleur de Marie from Saint Lazare, and in that manner we shall certainly learn something of her."

"It is true, my lord."

"Attempt then to make the discovery of that person, and visit him as soon as possible, my dear de Graün; and if you do not succeed yourself, put Mr. Badinot on the track. Spare nothing to discover traces of the poor child."

"Your royal Highness may rely upon my zeal."

"Truly," said Murph, "it is perhaps fortunate that Chourineur is returning, for his services may be very useful in these researches."

"You are right; and I am impatient to see in Paris my heroic preserver; for I never can forget that I am indebted to him for my life."

CHAPTER XV..... THE OFFICE.

Several days had now passed since Cecile had entered into the service of Jacques Ferrand; and we will now introduce the reader, who is already acquainted with the premises, into the office of the notary, at the time the clerks were at breakfast. An unprecedented and unheard of luxury supplied the place of the wretched ragout which was served for the clerks' breakfast, under the administration of the late Madam Seraphin. An enormous cold turkey, in an old paper box, reposed majestically in the centre of one of the tables, flanked by two loaves of new bread, a Holland cheese, and three bottles of sealed wine. An old leaden inkstand, filled with pepper and salt, served for condiments. Such was the bill of fare presented to the hungry clerks.

Each individual, armed with a knife and a ravenous appetite, was waiting, with famished impatience, for the signal to commence the festival. Some were exercising their jaws upon air, while cursing the absence of the principal clerk, without whom they could not, according to etiquette, commence the breakfast.

Such radical change in the fare of the clerks, announced a complete domestic revolution.

The following conversation, eminently Boeotian, if we may borrow that term from the witty writer who has rendered it popular, will throw some light upon that important question.

"Here is a turkey that had little expectation, when he entered life, of serving as provender for the clerks of our patron."

"Neither did the patron, when he entered the life of a notary, ever expect to give his clerks a turkey for breakfast."

"For, decidedly, the turkey belongs to us!" exclaimed *Leap-gutters**—the errand-boy of the office—with all the avidity of a gourmand.

"You forget yourself, Leap-gutters, my friend, for the bird must be to you a foreigner."

"And if you are a true Frenchman, you should despise foreigners."

"The best we can do for you is to give you the *claws*."

"They will serve you as an emblem of the speed with which you run on the errands of the office."

"I thought I had a right to the carcass," said Leap-gutters, grumbling.

"You have no right to it, but we may grant it to you in special favor, in the same manner that the Charter of 1814, which was the mere carcass of liberty, was granted to the people," said the Mirabeau of the office.

"By the way, speaking of carcasses," said one of the clerks, "may God bless the soul of Mother Seraphin! for, since she was drowned on that country excursion, we are no longer condemned to her eternal mince-meat."

"For a week past, the patron, instead of giving us breakfast ——"

"Allows for each of us, for our rations, forty sous per day."

"That 's what makes me say, 'God bless the soul of Mother Seraphin!'"

"During her reign, the patron would never have given us forty sous."

"'Tis enormous!"

"It is fairly fabulous!"

"There is not an office in Paris——"

"In Europe——"

"In the universe! where they allow a starved clerk forty sous per day, for his breakfast!"

"By the way, speaking of old Seraphin, who has seen the servant who supplies her place?"

"What, the Alsatian, that the portière of the house where poor Louise dwelt, brought here one evening, as the porter says?"

"Yes."

"I have not seen her yet."

"Nor I."

"By jingo! how the devil can you expect to see her, when the patron guards the pavilion more ferociously than ever!"

"And besides, the porter takes charge of the office now, and what chance have we to see the damsel?"

"I have had the privilege, thank you."

"Have you seen her?"

"Whereabouts?"

"How does the animal look?"

"Tall, or short?"

"Young, or old?"

"I am certain she is n't as pretty as that poor Louise: she was an excellent girl."

"As you have seen her, just tell how she is put together."

"When I say I have seen her, I mean I have seen her cap, and it was a funny one, upon my honor."

"Pshaw! how is it made?"

"'Twas a pink cap made of velvet; I should say, a kind of hood, like those which the broom-girls wear."

"What! an Alsatian cap? there is nothing very strange in that, since she came from there."

"You don't say so!"

"What astonishes you, pray? *a scalded cat fears even cold water.*"

"Look here, Chalomel; pray tell what one of your musty old proverbs has to do with the cap of the Alsatian?"

"Nothing, that I know of."

"Why did you spout it out, then?"

"Because *a kindness is never thrown away*, and because *the lizard is a friend to man.*"

"If Chalomel once commences with his proverbs, which have no more to do with the subject than the planetary system, he will never end. Come, swallow your proverbs, and tell us what you know about the servant."

"As I was passing yesterday through the yard, leaning against one of the windows of the lower floor, I saw——"

"What, the yard?"

"Nonsense, no, the servant: the lower windows are so dirty that I could not see the figure of the Alsatian; but as the top windows were more transparent, I saw her pink hood and a profusion of curls, black as jet; for her hair was dressed a la Titus."

"I don't believe the patron has seen, through his glasses, as much of the girl as Chalomel has: he is one of those old chaps, whom, as people say, if he should be the only male upon earth, population would n't increase."

"There is nothing very surprising in that; *his laugh is the*

* The errand boy of the office is called by his companions, "*Saute-ruisseau*," which we have been compelled to translate as above, as we are favored with no other name for Mr. Saute-ruisseau.

best who laughs last, and moreover, *punctuality is the politeness of kings*."

"How tedious Chalomel is, when he attempts to be so."

"*Tell me with whom you associate, and I will tell you who you are.*"

"Is n't that pretty ?"

"I have an idea that it is superstition which has made the patron so cursedly stupefied of late."

"I guess he gives us the forty sous for our breakfast, as a sort of penance."

"I believe that the old chap is mad."

"Or sick, perhaps."

"It seems to me, that the old fellow has a wild look about the eyes."

"We see but very little of him now; he who was once our nightmare—always in his study from morning to night, and ready to pounce upon our backs, stays away entire days, without poking his nose into the office."

"The consequence is, that the principal clerk has all the business to do."

"And therefore we shall starve to death, waiting for him."

"What changes have taken place in this office!"

"Poor Germain would be confounded if he were told: 'Just think, my boy, that the patron gives us forty sous for our breakfast!' 'Pshaw! it is impossible,' he would say. 'It is so possible, that he has announced it to me, Chalomel, in my own person.' 'You are jesting.' 'I jest! this is the way it occurred: During two or three days which followed the death of Madam Seraphin, we had no breakfast at all. We liked that well enough; for no breakfast at all, was better than that she gave us; but on the other hand, our luncheon cost us money. However, we were patient, and said, "the patron has got no servant, no housekeeper, and when he gets one, we shall have to live on hash again." It was n't so, my poor Germain; the old fellow finally employed a servant, and our breakfast was still buried in the river of oblivion. I was appointed a sort of deputy to present to the patron the complaints of our stomach; he was with the principal clerk. "I do not want to feed you in the morning," said he, in a gruff surly tone; "my servant has no time to prepare your breakfast." "But, sir, you are bound to give us our morning meal." "Well, you may send to the restaurateur for your breakfast, and I will pay for it. How much do you want? forty sous each?" added he, with some other subject evidently upon his mind, and mentioning "forty sous," in the same manner that he would have said twenty sous, or a hundred sous. "Yes, sir," I exclaimed, "forty sous will do," catching the ball as it bounded. "Let it be so," answered the notary; "the principal clerk will take charge of the expense, and I will settle with him." Thereupon the patron shut the door in my face.' You must confess, gentlemen, that Germain would be astonished at the extraordinary liberality of the patron."

"Germain would say, the patron *a bu* (is drunk.")

"That is truly an *abus*, (an abuse,") said Chalomel.

"We prefer your proverbs to your puns, Chalomel."

"Seriously; I believe that the patron is sick."

"For ten days past he is scarcely to be recognized. His cheeks are so hollow that you might thrust in your fist."

"And he is so absent-minded, that it is curious to see him. The other day he took off his glasses to read a deed; his eyes were red and burnt like live coals."

"He was right; *short bills make long friends*."

"For heaven's sake, don't interrupt me with your proverbs. I tell you, gentlemen, that it is very singular. I presented him the deed upside down."

"Which was upside down? The patron? It is singular, as you say. What the devil was he doing in that position? I should think 't would have given him the apoplexy, unless his habits, as you say, have changed very suddenly."

"How wearisome you are, Chalomel! I mean that it was the deed which I presented wrong end foremost."

"How mad he must have been!"

"Not at all; he did n't even perceive it. He locked at it for ten minutes, with his blood-stained eyes fixed upon it, and then he gave it back to me, saying: "It is all right."

"Always upside down?"

"Always."

"How could he have read the deed?"

"He could n't, unless he can read upside down."

"No man can do that."

"The patron looked so gloomy and savage, that I dared not open my lips, and I went away as if nothing had happened."

"I have got something to tell you. Four days ago I was in the office of the principal clerk, and in comes one client, two clients, three clients, with whom the patron had made an engagement. They waited impatiently, and requested me to go and rap at the door of the study. I rapped, and receiving no answer, I walked in."

"Well; what did you see?"

"Mr. Jacques Ferrand was leaning upon his arms, which were placed upon the table, and his bald head uncovered. He did not stir."

"He was asleep, probably."

"I thought so. I approached him, and said: 'There are some clients outside who wish to see you.' He did not move. 'Mr. Ferrand?' No reply. At length, I touched his shoulder, and he started up as if the devil had bitten him. His motion was so sudden, that his big glasses fell off from his nose, and I saw—you never can believe it——"

"Out with it. What did you see?"

"Tears!"

"Nonsense!"

"Is n't he a queer bird?"

"The patron weep! Get out of the way!"

"When you see him cry, bed-bugs will play on the French horn!"

"And chickens will wear Suwarrow boots!"

"Pshaw! pshaw! your nonsense won't prevent me from knowing what I saw with my own eyes. I tell you I saw him as I have described."

"What! Weeping?"

"Yes, weeping. And after that, he was wrathy at being caught in such a lacrymose condition, and sung out to me: 'Go away—go away!' 'But sir!'—'Go away, I tell you!' 'There are some clients in the office with whom you have made an engagement, sir, and——' 'I have n't the time to see them. Let them go to the devil, and you with them.' Thereupon he arose, as furious as he could be, and looked so much as if he would kick me out of the door, that I did n't wait for the compliment, but cut stick, and told the clients to go also. They did n't look greatly pleased, I assure you; but for the reputation of the office, I told them that the patron had caught the whooping cough."

This conversation was now interrupted by the entrance of the principal clerk, who entered as if pressed with business. His appearance was hailed by a general acclamation, and all eyes were turned toward the turkey.

"Without being uncivil, my lord, I must say that you have detained us from breakfast for a long time," said Chalomel.

"You must look out, for the next time our appetites won't be under such good control."

"It is not my fault, I assure you; I was more impatient than you are—the patron must be mad!"

"That 's what I have been saying."

"But the madness of the patron ought not to keep us from eating."

"It should have the opposite effect."

"We can talk just as well with our mouths full."

"A thousand times better," said Leap-gutters.

Chalomel was carving the turkey, and he said to the principal clerk, "What reason have you for thinking that the patron is crazy?"

"We were all inclined to think that he has become perfectly stupid, when he agreed to give us forty sous, per head, for our daily breakfast."

"I confess that I was as much surprised as you are, gentlemen; but it is a trifle, actually a trifle, compared with what has just occurred."

"You don't say so!" said another.

"Is the notary crazy enough to invite us to dine every day, at his expense, at the Cadran-Bleu?"

"And give us tickets to the play, after dinner?"

"And after that take us to the café, to top off with a punch?"

"And after that a——"

"Gentlemen, just as far as you please; but the scene which I have just observed is more frightful than funny."

"Give us the scene, I beg of you."

"That 's right; don't trouble yourself about the breakfast—we are all ears."

"And all jaws! I see through you, my covies; while I am speaking, your teeth will be in motion, and the turkey would be finished before my story. Be patient; I will reserve it for the dessert."

We do not know whether it was the goad of hunger or curiosity, that stimulated the mastication of the young limbs of the law, but the breakfast was so rapidly completed, that the moment for the story arrived immediately. In order not to be surprised by the patron, Leap-gutters was stationed, as a sentinel, in the adjoining apartment, to whom the claws and the carcass had been generously assigned.

The principal clerk now addressed his colleagues: "You must know that, for several days, the porter has been very much concerned about the health of the patron. As he sits up very late, he has seen Mr. Ferrand descending to the garden, several times during the night; and, whatever the state of the weather might be, whether it was cold or wet, he saw him walking there for some time, with hasty steps. He ventured, on one occasion, to leave his niche, and ask his master if he was in want of anything. The patron dismissed him with such a tone, that the porter now sticks to his nest, whenever he hears the footsteps of the patron, which happens every night, whatever the state of the atmosphere may be."

"The patron may be a somnambulist."

"That is very improbable; but these nocturnal promenades indicate great agitation of mind. But I will come to my story. I went this morning into the study of the patron, to ask him for some signatures. As I was about to open the door, it seemed to me that I heard voices inside. I stopped for a moment, and I distinguished two or three deep groans: they sounded like stifled cries of distress. After a moment's hesitation, fearing some accident, I opened the door."

"What did you see?"

"What do you suppose I saw? the patron upon his knees on the floor!"

"On his knees!"

"On the floor!"

"Yes; kneeling on the floor, with his face buried in his hands, and his elbows leaning on one of his old easy chairs."

"That is easily explained: he was offering up an extra prayer. He is a very pious man."

"It must have been a singular prayer; for I could hear nothing but stifled groans, except that he occasionally muttered, 'My God! my God!' like a man in despair. Upon seeing him in that condition, I did not know whether it was best for me to remain or depart."

"That would also have been my *political* opinion."

"I remained there in great embarrassment, when the patron arose and turned suddenly toward me. He had an old pocket handkerchief between his hands; his glasses remained upon the chair. Never, never in my life, gentlemen, have I seen such an expression of countenance: he looked like a demoniac. I started back, frightened—yes! upon my word of honor, frightened. The notary then——"

"Grasped you by the throat?"

"No; far from it. He looked at me first with a wild gaze, dropped the handkerchief, which he had torn to pieces with his teeth, and exclaimed, throwing himself in my arms, "Alas! I am very wretched."

"What a scene! Are you jesting?"

"Jesting? no! In spite of his hideous face, when he uttered those words, his voice was so subdued and so gentle."

"So gentle! nonsense! There is not a watchman's rattle, nor a screech-owl with a cold, but appears musical to my ears, compared with the voice of the patron."

"That may be so; but at that moment his voice was so plaintive, that I felt almost moved; for you know that Mr. Ferrand is not much inclined to exhibit his feelings. 'Sir,' said I to him, 'believe—rest assured, that——' 'Allow me, I pray *thee*,' said he, interrupting me; 'it is a great relief to be able to confide to another that we are suffering.' He evidently mistook me for some other person."

"Did he say *thou** to you? Then you owe us two bottles of Bordeaux wine—

'When thou and thee the patrons say,
For all our drinks you then must pay.'

It is a proverb which says so, and proverbs are sacred: they are the wisdom of nations."

"Come, come, Chalomel, relieve us from your wise saws and modern instances."

"You may imagine, gentlemen, that when the patron said thou to me, I saw at once that he had mistaken me for some one else, or that he was in a raging fever. I released myself from his embrace, saying to him, 'Be calm, sir, be calm, it is I.' Then he looked upon me with a vacant stare of amazement."

"Now you are telling the truth."

"His eyes were wild. 'Ha! What is it? Who are you! What do you want?' And at each question he passed his hand over his brow, as if to drive away the cloud which darkened his thoughts."

"Darkened his thoughts! Bravo! Mr. Principal Clerk! you and I must write a melodrama—

'The man that speaks so well, by all that's bright,
Should on a melodrama show his might.'"

* "Thou" is, in French, a familiar mode of address.

"Hold your tongue, Chalomel."

"I don't understand how it is; but when he was restored to his composure, he sang a very different song. He frowned most terribly; and he said to me severely, without giving me time to respond: 'What have you come here for? Have you been long here? Can I not remain in my room without being surrounded by spies? What did I say? What have you heard? Answer me! answer me!' Upon my word, he looked so savage that I answered, 'I have heard nothing, sir; I entered this very moment.' 'Do you not deceive me?' 'No, sir.' 'Well, what is wanted?' 'I came to ask you for some signatures, sir.' 'Give me those papers.' And he seated himself to sign half-a-dozen instruments without reading them. He, who never before placed his name to any instrument without spelling it over twice, letter by letter. I observed that his hand would stop occasionally during a signature, as if he was absorbed by some fixed idea, and then he would continue to sign away almost convulsively."

When all the papers were signed, he told me to leave the room, and I heard him descend the private staircase which communicates between his study and the yard."

"I adhere to this question; what the devil is the matter with him?"

"Gentlemen, perhaps he mourns the loss of Madam Seraphin!"

"Pshaw! is he capable of regretting anybody?"

"That reminds me that the curate of Boune Nouvelle and his vicar, have several times called to see the patron, but they were not admitted; that is as astonishing as any other circumstance, for formerly they were eternally here."

"What bothers me, is to know what kind of repairs the carpenter and the locksmith have been employed about in the pavilion."

"The fact is, that they have been engaged there for three days in succession."

"And besides, on one evening, some furniture was brought in a large box."

"As for me, gentlemen, I give it up, as the swan of Cambrai, has it."

"It is, perhaps, remorse for the imprisonment of Germain, which torments him."

"Remorse in the notary's breast? it is too hard and too tough, as the eagle of Meaux, hath it."

"That Chalomel is a funny rogue."

"By the way, poor Germain will have famous recruits in his prison."

"How so?"

"I read in the 'Gazette des Tribunaux,' that the gang of robbers and murderers who were arrested on the Champs Elysees, one of the small subterranean taverns there——"

"What caves they are!"

"That the gang of reprobates have been committed to La Force."

"Poor Germain! it will afford him very select society."

"Louise Morel will have her share of the recruits also; for in the gang, they say, there is an entire family of thieves and murderers, from father to son, and from mother to daughter."

"The women will be sent to Saint Lazare, where Louise is confined."

"It was, perhaps, one of that gang who assassinated the Countess, who lives near the Observatory; one of the clients of the patron. He has sent me often enough to inquire about that Countess. He seems to take great interest in her health. I must be just; it is the only subject upon which he seems to have any reason left. Even yesterday, he asked me to inquire concerning the situation of the Countess McGregor."

"Well, how is she?"

"Oh, the same answer is always given; hope one day, despair the next; they never know whether she will survive from one day to the other. Day-before yesterday, they gave her up; but yesterday they were slightly encouraged. What renders her condition more desperate is, that she has been attacked with a brain fever."

"Did you enter the house, and see the place where the murder was committed?"

"Oh no, indeed; I went no further than the gate, and the porter is not very communicative, I assure you."

"Gentlemen! gentlemen! beware! here is the patron coming in," said Leap-gutter, entering the office, armed with his carcass.

The young men immediately hastened to the table, driving their pens with commendable velocity, while Leap-gutter deposited the skeleton of the turkey in a box filled with documents.

Jacques Ferrand made his appearance; his sandy hair, in which a few gray locks were seen, escaping from his old silk cap, fell

in disorder around his temples. The veins which were seen in the region of the head, were swollen with blood, while his face was of a livid pallor. The expression of his eye was concealed beneath his broad green glasses, but the strange alteration of his countenance indicated clearly the ravages of a devouring passion. He passed slowly through the office without uttering a word to his clerks—without being conscious of their presence; entered the room where the principal clerk was employed, passed through it as well as his own study, and descended the private staircase which led to the yard. The notary having left all the doors open behind him, the clerks had good reason for being astonished at the strange conduct of their patron, who had entered by means of one staircase, and departed by another, without pausing in any of the rooms which he passed through, in an abstracted and mechanical manner.

CHAPTER XVI. ..... THOU SHALT NOT BE LIBIDINOUS.

"———But instead of being satisfied by that union of mind and heart which is the limit of friendship the voluptuousness which I felt at the age I then was, stirred up the muddy bottom of lechery, which sent forth clouds that darkened the eyes of my understanding."

"———I abandoned myself without restraint, to my sensual pleasures, the heat of which, like boiling pitch, burned my heart, and consumed all its vigor and strength."

"———When I heard some of my companions boast of their debaucheries, and seem to be proud of them in proportion as they were the more infamous, I was ashamed that I had not done as much."

CONFESSIONS OF SAINT AUGUSTINE.—Book ii. Chap. ii. and iii.

IT was dark. The profound silence which reigned throughout the pavilion occupied by Jacques Ferrand, was interrupted by a blast of wind, and the dashing of the rain in torrents against the wall. These mournful sounds seemed to add to the ominous solitude of the notary's abode. In a sleeping apartment upon the second floor, comfortably fitted up with new furniture, and with a thick carpet upon the floor, a young female was seen standing before a bright fire, which sparkled in the chimney.

The most singular and striking feature in the arrangement of the room, was, that in the middle of the door, which was very securely bolted, there was a small aperture or wicket, some five or six inches square, so arranged that it could be opened from the outside.

A lamp, with a shade of ground glass, dispensed throughout the room a mellowed light, the walls of which were covered by paper of a pink shade; while the hangings of the windows, and couch, and the covering of a large sofa, were of silk-damask of the same shade. We have been thus particular in describing these details, in order to show that the luxurious pretensions of the apartment indicated an entire revolution in the miserly spirit and Spartan contempt of comfort which characterized Jacques Ferrand.

Relieved against that pink-colored paper, was seen the voluptuous and enchanting figure of the Creole, which we will now attempt to portray. The bloom of life had added the finish to her tall and beautiful form; the full swell of her bust, and the broad development of her frame beneath, gave to her round and beautiful waist such a slender and graceful appearance, that she might have used her necklace as a belt.

The Alsatian costume which she wore, was admirably adapted to display to full advantage the exciting charm of her figure, and increase the effect which the peculiar style of Cecile's beauty could not fail to produce. A spencer of dark merino was just sufficiently parted to disclose the swell of her bosom; the sleeves were stretched by the rounded arms of the Metisse; its seams were embroidered with red worsted; and a row of silver buttons were coquettishly fastened upon it in front. The short, orange-colored gown, seemed almost too wide, such ample folds were necessary to inclose the luxurious form beneath; and yet the garment displayed the sculptured contour of her limbs; while her tapering ancles were tightly wrapped in blue and scarlet stockings, in the style of the old Flemish painters, who so kindly display the garters of their robust heroines.

Never did an artist dream of a more perfect model of beauty and proportion, than the leg of Cecile presented. The light and slender ancle swelled into faultless symmetry above, and terminated below in such a delicate foot, that it was fairly lost in a little black morocco shoe, with a silver buckle.

Slightly inclining on one side, Cecile stood in front of the glass, upon the mantel. The spencer was thrown open, and revealed the naked loveliness of her neck and bosom of Parian whiteness, but without transparency. While removing the small cap from her head, to substitute in its place a Madras handkerchief, the Creole revealed a most luxuriant growth of raven hair, which parted upon the middle of the head, and curling naturally, fell as low as the junction of the neck and shoulders.

It is necessary to be acquainted with the inimitable taste, peculiarly their own, with which the Creoles twist bright-colored handkerchiefs about their heads, to form any idea of the graceful head-gear which Cecile assumed for the night; and of the delightful blending of its variegated colors, with the silky ringlets of her dark hair, which, escaping in many places from its folds, fell down upon the pale but full cheek of Cecile. Both of her arms were now raised to her head, and her small fingers employed in perfecting a large bow behind her left ear.

There was a magic about Cecile's countenance, which impressed itself for ever upon the imagination of the individual who had once beheld it. Cheeks perfectly oval, and of a hue like the leaf of a camelia, gilded by a ray of the sun, were surmounted by a bold and slightly projecting brow, beneath which shone those eyes of extraordinary size and of peculiar expression, from which her mysterious powers of enchantment flashed. The pupil covered nearly all of the visible part of the organ; and between its dark orb and the long curved lashes which sheltered it, the blue transparency of the ball could scarcely be discerned. Her chin was round, and finely chiselled; her nose straight, with nostrils that dilated at the slightest emotion; and the pouting ruby of her lips, was at the same time impudent and amorous. Let the reader imagine this magical eye, flashing from a countenance of peculiar shade; lips smooth and dewy, like moistened coral; a form of most exciting proportions, and suple as that of a panther, and he can form some idea of an incarnation of that sensuality which is kindled beneath a tropical sun. Every one has heard of those enchanting vampires of southern climes, who have even revealed themselves in mortal shape to a few Europeans, who weave a spell around their devotees, which cannot be broken; wrap all his senses and all his energies in voluptuous enjoyment, and so intoxicate and exhaust their victim by means of their fatal blandishments, that not a drop of his blood, nor an atom of his gold is left; leaving him only in the forcible metaphor of that country: "*his tears to drink, and his heart to gnaw.*" Such was Cecile.

For a time, her detestable instincts had been restrained by her warm affection for David; but they developed themselves in Europe, from the combined effect of a high state of civilization, and a northern climate.

Instead of pouncing upon her prey at once, like others of her class, who think of devouring as soon as possible, one more fortune, and one more life, Cecile would first fasten upon her victim that irresistible eye; she would draw him by every seducing art which sensuality could suggest, gradually, step by step, to the brink, to the centre, of the whirlpool which raged around her. She would, with refined cruelty, pause to view him panting, suffering, tortured, burned with unsatisfied desire, prolonging his raging delirium by every refinement which her art could suggest, until, conquered by the fury of her own instincts, she clasped him in her murderous embrace. The famished tiger which leaps upon the prey, which she devours with a roar, inspires less horror than the serpent, which fascinates its victim by a silent gaze, draws it nearer by degrees, twines about it inextricable folds, squeezes slowly away the life that is palpitating under its scaly sides, and seems to feed as much upon its sufferings as upon its blood.

Cecile, as we have said, had but recently arrived from Germany. She had been formerly ruined by a man awfully depraved, and for some time continued to exercise and display her dangerous blandishments unknown to David, who loved her with blind idolatry; but soon the guilt of her adventures was unveiled, horrible disclosures were made, and the wretched woman was condemned to imprisonment for life. Add to all these powers of fascination, a mind adroit, cunning, insinuating; an intellect so acute, that in one year she learned to speak both French and German with facility, and occasionally with natural eloquence; and finally, a corruption worthy of the courtesan queens of ancient Rome; undaunted audacity, and inclinations which suffered nothing to stand in the way of their indulgence, and the reader will have some idea of the new servant of Jacques Ferrand;—the resolute creature who had dared to venture her head within the jaws of the wolf. And yet, by a strange waywardness of mind, when she had learned from the Baron de Graün, that she was to practice upon the beastly appetite of the notary all her powers of fascination, without affording the slightest opportunity for gratifying them; and also, for what ends of just retribution her unrivaled blandishments were called in play, Cecile entered into the part she was expected to perform with great zest, or rather with a ferocious antipathy to Jacques Ferrand, which had been stimulated by the narration of his inhuman violence toward Louise—a narration which had been rendered necessary, in order to guard the Creole against a similar stratagem of the monster

Some retrospective words concerning the notary are indispensable. When Cecile had been presented to him by Madam Pipelet as an orphan over whom she wished herself to exercise no control, Jacques Ferrand was less impressed with the beauty of the Creole than fascinated by her glances—glances which, at the first interview, kindled a flame in his combustible temperament which disturbed the operations of his reason. We alluded to this peculiarity of his disposition in narrating his interview with the Duchess de Lucenay, that the man who was ordinarily so cool, so collected, so crafty, so cunning, forgot his calculations and his profound dissimulation when the demon of lust obscured his understanding. Besides, he had no reason for distrusting the protege of Madam Pipelet. After her interview with the portière, Madam Seraphin had proposed to the notary to supply the place of Louise with a young girl equally dependent, and he had accepted the proposal with eagerness, in the hope of taking advantage with impunity of the unprotected and friendless condition of his servant. His suspicions being lulled, Jacques Ferrand found, during the progress of these events, additional reasons for security. Everything corresponded with his wishes. The death of Madam Seraphin had relieved him from a dangerous accomplice. The supposed death of Fleur de Marie delivered him from a living evidence of one of his early crimes, and finally, thanks to the death of Chouette and the unexpected murder of the Countess McGregor—for her life was despaired of—he had no apprehensions of any disclosures which these two women might make; for their researches after his victims might have proved fatal. We repeat, that no sentiment of suspicion was now harbored in the mind of the notary, to counterbalance his sudden and irresistible attraction toward Cecile. He seized, with avidity, the opportunity of securing in his solitary dwelling, the pretended niece of Madam Pipelet.

After having disclosed to the reader the character, habits, and peculiar circumstances in which Jacques Ferrand was now placed—the fascinating charms and blandishments of the Creole which we have attempted to describe, a few additional facts which we shall soon explain, will satisfactorily account, we hope, for the rapid and disorderly passion of the notary for that seducing and dangerous creature.

It must, moreover, be acknowledged, that if women of the peculiar character of Cecile, inspired with nothing but disgust and repugnance, men of elevated sentiments and of refined and pure tastes; they assert an irresistible sway and a magical influence over a man of the unrelieved sensuality of the notary. At the first glance he divines the nature of such women almost instinctively. He courts them; he is drawn toward them by an uncontrollable appetency, and soon mysterious affinities, an invisible chain of sympathies, bind him to the feet of his fearful ideal: for they alone can quench the flames which they alone can kindle.

A just and overruling retribution brought the Creole in contact with the notary. He was about to commence a terrible expiation. Lust, as insatiate as that of a brute, had driven him to the commission of frightful crimes;—to persecute, with the malice of a fiend, a virtuous and indigent family; to scatter through it misery, madness, and death! Lust was now to be made the avenging instrument of justice; for there is a retributive connection between the indulgence of this vice, and the punishment which follows it. An elevated and pure love, even when it is not crowned with all the success it desires, can find consolation in the sweets of friendship; in the esteem which a woman, worthy of being adored, will always offer in the place of a more tender sentiment. If such consolation does not pour a balm into the wounds of the unhappy lover; if his despair is as memorable as his love, he can acknowledge and glory in the hopeless constancy of his affection. But what relief can be administered to those beastly appetites, which are kindled into a frenzy by mere physical charms? Such charms are as imperious over gross organizations, as moral beauty over refined and delicate souls. Sentimental love is not the only passion that is blind, sudden and exclusive—not the only one which can concentrate every thought of the mind, every emotion of the soul, upon the beloved object, and expel all other affections from the nature, and determine the destiny of a whole life. Sensual passion may reach, as in the case of Jacques Ferrand, an incredible intensity; and all the phenomena which distinguish the phases of intense spiritual love, are reproduced in this passion, which is gross and material.

Although the Creole had determined that the notary should never realize the slightest gratification of his wishes, it was no part of her designs to banish from his mind the excitements of hope. But the vague and shadowy hopes with which she kept him in play, floated at the will of so many caprices, that it became an additional torture, and riveted still closer the burning chain which he wore. If the reader is astonished, that a man of the notary's audacity had not already resorted to violence, to overcome the artful and premeditated resistance, he must have forgotten that Cecile was not a second Louise. Besides, on the day succeeding her introduction to the notarys, she displayed traits of character very different from those she had assumed for the purpose of securing a situation with her master; or he would not, in the course of two days, have become the victim of his artful servant. The Creole, having learned the fate of Louise Morel from the Baron de Graün, and also the means to which the notary had resorted to accomplish his purposes, upon entering this solitary mansion, had taken excellent precautions to pass the first night in perfect security. On the evening of her arrival, being left alone in the company of the notary, who, in order not to alarm her, affected perfect indifference to her charms, and roughly ordered her to bed: she informed him, artlessly, "That she was very much afraid of robbers at night; but that she was strong, muscular, resolute, and prepared to defend herself in any emergency."

"What with?" asked Jacques Ferrand.

"With this!" replied the Creole, drawing from her full dress a small stiletto, sharp as a needle, the sight of which started some reflections to pass through the notary's mind. But being soon persuaded that it was only *robbers* that excited her apprehensions, he conducted her to the chamber, formerly occupied by Louise. After she had examined the room, Cecile said to him, in a tremulous tone, and casting down her eyes—"That in consequence of the same fear, she should be compelled o pass the night on the chair, because she saw no lock nor bolt upon the door."

Jacques Ferrand was, even now, under the influence of her fatal charms, her magical eye; but unwilling to endanger his eventual success by arousing the suspicions of the Creole, he told her, in a gruff voice: "That she was silly to indulge such fears;" and he promised her, that during the next day, a bolt should be placed upon the door.

That night *the Creole did not retire.*

The next morning the notary went up to her room, for the purpose of informing her of the work which he expected her to perform. He had resolved, during the first days of her residence in his house, to maintain more than his wonted hypocritical reserve, in order to inspire her with a deceitful confidence. But, overcome by her rare and unequalled voluptuousness of face and figure, which by the light of day, appeared even more enchanting; transported by the awakening violence of his fatal passion, he stammered forth some compliments to her beauty. With a sagacity that was fairly intuitive, the dangerous siren had perceived, at her first interview with the notary, that she had him in her spells. At this intimation of his flame, she thought that the time had fully arrived to dismiss her affected timidity, and change her mask.

The Creole assumed at once an impudent, undaunted air, and as Jacques Ferrand broke forth in new raptures at the charming person of his *new servant*, she said to him, imperiously:

"Look me in the eyes; though I am dressed as an Alsatian peasant, do I look like a servant?"

"What do you mean?" exclaimed Jacques Ferrand.

"Look at that hand; has it been accustomed to menial labor?" and she showed a white, soft hand, with delicate fingers, and nails which were rosy and polished as agate, but whose treacherous bister tinge, revealed the mixture of her blood; "and that foot; does it belong to a servant?" displaying at the same time, a foot coquettishly shod, which the notary had not yet remarked, and which his eyes did not desert until he was forced to turn them on her face with amazement.

"I told to my Aunt Pipelet, the story which suited me best; she is entirely ignorant of my past life, and believed readily enough that I was reduced to a menial's condition, by the death of my parent; but you have to much sagacity to share her error, *dear master*."

"And who are you, then?" exclaimed Jacques Ferrand, more and more surprised at this extraordinary language.

"That is my secret, sir; for reasons which I do not propose to reveal, I was obliged to flee from Germany in my present disguise. It suited my designs to remain in Paris for some time, in the most secure seclusion that it was possible to find. My aunt, under the delusion that I was a poverty-stricken outcast, proposed to me to enter into your service: she intimated the solitary life you would force me to endure, and told me explicitly, that I would never be permitted to go out. I accepted with joy, for my aunt could not have more completely anticipated my wishes. Who would search for *me* in the devout household of Jacques Ferrand, the notary?"

"What crime have you committed, to desire to conceal yourself?"

"Crime! some sweet sin, some trifling pecadillo, perhaps; but that, sir, is my secret."

"And what are your intentions, Mademoiselle?"

"They remain unchanged. Had it not been, sir, for your leering and significant compliments to my beauty, I might have spared this confession until your well-known sagacity should have drawn it from me. Listen to me, *my dearest master;* I accepted temporarily the situation, or rather, I assumed the character of a servant: I was forced to do so. I have courage enough to carry out the part I have taken; I am ready to endure all the consequences of it. I will serve you with zeal, activity, and respect, in order to preserve my situation—affording me an unknown and secure retreat; but, at the least syllable of gallantry, at the least liberty you presume to take, I will instantly leave your house; not from prudery, I assure you, sir, for I have nothing of it about me;" and she darted a look, charged with electricity, into the soul of the shuddering notary. "No! you see I am no prude," continued she, with a provoking smile, that disclosed dazzling teeth. "Prude! Heavens! when love seizes me, bacchanals are saints in comparison! If you will examine the subject, Mr. Notary, you will see that I intend to perform here all the duties of a servant. You have my secret, at least a part of it. If, however, you wish to play the part of a gentleman; if you are too gallant to permit such a beautiful creature to serve you; if even, indeed, you should wish to exchange situations, and become my slave, I shall most cheerfully accept the civility. But, always remember, upon these conditions; that I never shall be compelled to leave the house, that you shall display toward me only those *paternal* attentions becoming your age. I do not mean that this last condition shall restrict you from calling me charming, from admiring my beauty; on the other hand, such are the rewards with which I shall repay your devotion."

"The only rewards?" asked the stammering lecher.

"Yes; the only ones, unless solitude and the devil drive me mad; which I think will be impossible, for your society will dispel the one, and your *holiness* exorcise the other. Come, decide; I will occupy no dubious position, no middle ground. I will be your servant; nothing more: or, you shall be mine. If you will not accept these terms, I will leave your house, and ask my aunt to find me another situation. This may appear to you singular; I will grant you that it should: but if you take me for an adventurer, without means of support, you are deceived. In order that my aunt might unwittingly become subservient to my designs, I told her that I was so poor that I could purchase no clothes but these; but I can show you a purse that is pretty well lined, one end with gold, the other with diamonds." And the Creole exposed a purse, through the meshes of which the gold shone and the diamonds sparkled. "Unfortunately, all the wealth in the world could not purchase for me a retreat so secure as the retirement in which you live, and your peculiar character furnishes. Decide as to which alternative you will adopt, and you will be of great service to me. You see that I rely upon your honor; for to inform you that I seek concealment, is also to inform you that I am pursued. But I am confident that you would not betray me, even if it was in your power."

This romantic confidence, this sudden shifting of her mask, completely confounded the already shaken apprehensions of Jacques Ferrand. Who can this woman be? why does she conceal herself? were the questions which he involuntarily asked himself. Was it chance alone which had conducted her to his house? Or if, on the contrary, she has come here with some concealed design, what can that design be?

Among all the hypotheses which this singular adventure suggested, the real motive of her presence in his house never once occurred. He imagined that he had no other enemies in the world but the victims of his lust and cupidity; and they were all reduced to such misfortune and distress, that he could suspect none of them of laying a snare of which Cecile was the bait. With what intention also could any snare of this character be laid for him? No; the sudden metamorphosis of Cecile inspired Jacques Ferrand's mind with only one doubt. He supposed, that if the story which she told was a mere fiction, she was, in fact, an adventurer; who, being aware of his wealth, had introduced herself into his house with the mercenary motive of entrapping him into a marriage. But, though his avarice and cupidity were shocked at the idea of such a consummation, he thought, with shuddering, that the fear was suggested too late; for the one word which would have driven her from his premises, he found himself entirely unable to speak. These thoughts, however, did not check for an instant, the ardent ecstacy with which the sensual loveliness of the luscious Creole had wrapt his senses; for since yesterday, he had given up all resistance to the fascinating charms of the delightful being for whom his bosom yearned. All the love of which his nature was capable, was excited to a most irrepressible fury. Already the idea of her departure from his house, could not for a moment be endured. Already a ferocious jealousy attacked his soul, that another's arms might clasp the voluptuous treasures, which were denied to his own; and he felt a selfish satisfaction in saying to himself. "As long as she is secreted in my house, no other mortal can enjoy that enviable rapture."

The boldness of her language—the melting fire of her eyes, the provoking freedom of her manners—revealed clearly that she was guilty of no falsehood when she said, "I am not a prude!" This conviction, by inspiring indefinite hopes, strengthened the chains with which Cecile had bound him. In one word, the lust of the sensualist, stifling the appealing voice of reason, threw him blindfolded into the torrent of lascivious desires, which bore him thoughtlessly onward.

The notary was finally forced to concede, that the Creole should only be ostensibly his servant, that scandal might be allayed; and to throw around his *guest* additional security, he even relinquished the idea of employing any other servant, and even condescended to serve both himself and her. A restaurateur of the neighborhood was to bring his meals; the clerks were to receive money to purchase their breakfast, and the porter was to take charge of the office; and he friendlily agreed to provide a room on the second floor, with all the furniture which her taste could suggest. Cecile offered to sustain the expense of the change; but the lavish notary would not for a moment entertain the suggestion, and expended *two thousand francs* in furnishing her apartment.

Such generosity was unprecedented in the notary, and demonstrated the extraordinary violence of his passion.

The terrible retribution of this hardened and crime-stained reprobate now commenced. Secluded in his deserted mansion, denying himself to every human being, maddened and tortured by his insane passion, and despairing of penetrating the mystery which enveloped his avenging fury, he became her most abject menial. He waited upon her at meals—he was both the valet and scullion of the Creole's apartment.

Warned by the Baron that a narcotic had been administered to Louise, Cecile drank nothing but the clearest water; ate no dishes but such as could not be disguised, selected for herself the chamber which she was to occupy, and assured herself that it was accessible by no concealed doors. Besides, she soon convinced the notary that she was not a woman who could be caught by surprise, nor one against whom he could use violence with impunity. She was vigorous, muscular, and armed with a murderous weapon—none but a frantic maniac would have encountered, and she had even secured herself against such a contingency. In order, however, not to drive the notary to despair, the Creole appeared occasionally touched by the displays of his tenderness, and by the tyrannical dominion to which he had surrendered himself. To inspire him with the delusion that by uninterrnitted acts of tenderness and devotion—by casting all his pride, all his energies of body and soul at her feet, he might cause his age and his ugliness to be forgotten; she delighted in describing, in burning words, the ravishing delights with which she could wrap his senses in Elysium, should that miracle of love ever be performed.

Upon hearing these words from the lips of one who was so young, so beautiful, and so ravishing: the notary felt that his mind was wandering. Consuming and voluptuous images haunted his imagination, during his sleeping and waking hours: he was, in fact, enveloped in the shirt of Nessus. These nameless tortures deprived him of appetite, health, and sleep. In spite of the cold, and the rain, he would descend at midnight into his garden, and seek, by violent exercise and precipitate steps, to soothe, to cool, to quench his burning ardor. Again, he would feed his fiery eyes by gazing into the chamber where the lovely Creole reclined upon her couch—for she had the infernal condescension to place a wicket in her door, which she frequently opened, for Cecile had but one object—to irritate, beyond all endurance, the inhuman passions of the sensual being—to exasperate him into madness, that she might be able to execute the orders which she had received. The frightful consummation seemed to be at hand. The punishment of Ferrand, from day to day, became more worthy of his crimes. He endured all the torments of Hell. Absorbed, wandering, indifferent to his most important interests, to the maintenance of his reputation, as a grave, austere, and pious man—a usurped reputation, but acquired by long years of dissimulation and cunning—he astounded his clerks by the aberration of his mind, enraged his clients by his refusal to re

ceive them, and dismissed scornfully the priesthood; who, deceived by his hypocrisy, had been, thus far, the most enthusiastic and noisy trumpeters of his virtues. To languor so subduing as to draw tears from his eyes, transports of rage succeeded, and when his frenzy had reached its paroxysm, he roared in his solitary lair, like a savage beast of prey. When these attacks of passion terminated, only by a general lassitude, a complete prostration of his whole system, he did not enjoy that death-like calm which is often produced by the annihilation of thought. The fiery condition of the blood of the man, who had all the vigor of mature age, gave him no truce from the conflict—not a moment's repose. His whole system was incessantly influenced by the boiling of its fluids.

As we have already said, Cecile was arranging her dress for the night, before retiring to her slumbers. At a slight noise proceeding from the corridor, she turned her face toward the door.

CHAPTER XVII. ..... THE WICKET.

Notwithstanding the noise which Cecile had heard at the door, she continued, with the utmost tranquillity, her toilet for the night. She drew from her waist, where it served as a busk, a stiletto of some six inches long, inclosed in a black sheath, with a small ebony handle, ornamented with silver, perfectly convenient to grasp. This was no weapon for display. She drew it with excessive precaution from its sheath, and placed its triangular blade, of the best tempered Damascus steel, upon the mantelpiece; its point, sharp as a needle, could have pierced through a dollar without being blunted. Washed with a subtle and penetrating poison, the least prick of the stiletto was certain death. Jacques Ferrand having once expressed his doubts of the dangerous virtues of the weapon, Cecile had made an experiment in *anima vili*—the body of an unfortunate house-dog, which being scratched upon the nose, fell down, and died in horrible convulsions. Having placed the weapon upon the mantelpiece, Cecile drew off her black spencer, and exposed to gaze her arms, shoulders, and bosom, like a fashionable lady, dressed for a ball. According to the custom with most girls of mixed blood, she wore, instead of corsets, an inner waist of double linen, which fitted lightly her form. Her orange petticoat still remained fastened under this kind of waist, with short sleeves, and composed a new costume, much less studied than the first; and harmonized beautifully with her scarlet stockings, and the variegated handkerchief which was artistically twisted about her head. Nothing could be more perfect and chiselled than the contour of her arms, and the swell of her polished shoulders, in which two darling dimples were imbedded, and to which a small coquettish and velveted mole gave an additional grace.

A profound sigh now attracted the Creole's attention; she smiled bewitchingly, and twisted around her fingers one of the long locks which escaped from her handkerchief.

"Cecile! Cecile!" uttered a voice, to whose gruff tone a plaintive accent had been added; and the flattened and ghastly visage of the notary appeared at the wicket, with eyeballs that glistened in the darkness.

Cecile, who had been thus far silent, commenced warbling a Creole air. The words of this soothing melody were sweet and expressive, and although restrained, the powerful contralto of Cecile predominated over the noise of the dashing torrents of rain, and the violent gusts of wind, which shook the old house to its foundation.

"Cecile! Cecile!" said Jacques Ferrand, with his sepulchral voice modulated into a suppliant tone.

The Creole interrupted herself suddenly, turned quickly her head, and appearing to hear, for the first time, the voice of the notary, approached the door in an easy, careless, languishing manner.

"Ah! my dear master," said she, in derision, with a slight foreign accent, which added another charm to the clear and ringing tones of her voice.

"You are, indeed, beautiful!" muttered the notary.

"Is that really your opinion! Do you think that this Madras handkerchief is well suited to my dark hair!"

"Every day I find you more beautiful than before."

"And my arm: did you ever notice how white it is?"

"Monster! monster! depart, leave me!" said Jacques Ferrand, in a furious tone.

A merry and melodious laugh from the Creole responded to this imprecation.

"No! no! I cannot endure my sufferings. Would that I did not fear death," exclaimed the notary, in a deep voice. "But to die would be to renounce you for ever, and you are too beautiful to lose. I am willing to endure my tortures, if I can look at you."

"Look at me! look at me! I pray you! this wicket was made with that design; and also that we might interchange our thoughts, like agreeable friends; and charm away the weary hours of seclusion—which pass lightly over me, you are such a kind and excellent master! These are dangerous confessions, which I should only allow myself to make through this door."

"And will you not open the door! you behold how submissive I am. I could have attempted to enter into the room with you this evening, but I did not."

"You are submissive for two reasons—in the first place, you know that my wandering life has forced upon me the habit of wearing this stiletto, and that I can manage, with a dexterous hand, this venomous jewel, sharper than the fang of a viper; and you know also, that the very moment I have any cause to complain, I shall quit for ever this house, leaving you a thousand times more in love, since you have condescended to profess love for your unworthy servant."

"My servant! It is I who am your slave, mocked and despised."

"That is true."

"And does not my subjection move you?"

"It amuses me during these long days, and longer nights."

"The cursed woman!"

"To speak seriously, I am rather flattered by your wan, wobegone, and distracted appearance. It is an ungratifying triumph; but you are the only man upon whom I can exert my charms."

"Am I compelled to listen to such taunts without revenge—to be consumed by my powerless rage?"

"With what slight discernment you are gifted; I have never, perhaps, addressed you in more tender terms."

"Scoff, rail at me?"

"I do not scoff, but confess that I never saw a man of your age so amorous as yourself. A man young and beautiful, would be incapable of a passion as constant and ardent as yours. An Adonis is too much in love with himself to love us with that intensity we covet; his ardor is trifling, and nothing is so easy as to gratify it; it is his due, but he is hardly grateful for the kindness with which we treat him. But to meet your passion, my master, would be to transport you from earth to heaven; it would be to realize your most delicious dreams, your wildest hopes. If some fairy should whisper to you, 'I can, in one second, place Cecile in your arms, whom you so passionately adore,' you would believe her gifted with a supernatural power, would you not, my master?"

"Yes, oh! yes! I would."

"If you were better skilled in the language of passion, if you were better acquainted with the thousand arts by which the soul is inspired with love, I should be tempted to perform in your favor the functions of that benevolent fairy: do you understand?"

"I understand that you are trifling with my love, and railing at me as you always do, in a merciless manner."

"It may be that solitude may suggest to me singular fancies." Thus far, in their interviews, the tone of Cecile had been satirical, sardonic; but she pronounced these last with such a serious and deliberative tone, and accompanied them with such a significant glance of her eye, that the notary started.

"Speak no more; do not cast such glances on me; you will drive me mad! I should prefer that you would say to me *never*, for then I could abhor you, and drive you from my house," said the notary, who had again yielded to an indefinite hope: "Yes, yes; I should then have no favors to ask, none to expect; but wo, wo to me, I now hope, in spite of myself, that I may one day owe to your eccentric caprice what I never shall obtain from your love. You ask me to convince you of my passion. Great God! do you not behold how wretched I am! I do, however, all that is in my power to gratify your slightest wishes. You asked to be concealed from every eye; have I not concealed you at the risk of my own reputation and my most important interests? I know not who you are; do I not respect your secret? Do I ever speak to you of it? I asked you of your past life, and you gave me no reply."

"Well, I was wrong, and I will give you a proof of blind confidence, my master. Listen to me."

"Ah! you are about again to practice some cruel joke."

"I am serious now; you deserve to know the life of her to whom you have granted such a generous hospitality;" and the Creole added, with a weeping hypocritical compunction of tone, "I am the daughter of a brave soldier—the brother of my aunt Pipelet; I received an education to which my rank did not entitle me. I was first ruined, and then abandoned by a rich young man, and to escape the wrath of my father, who was intractable on all points of honor, I was obliged to flee from my native country:" then bursting into a laugh, Cecile added, "Is

not that a very pretty history, and very probable? for it has been often related. Satisfy your curiosity with this until I indulge you with some more piquant revelation."

"I was very sure it was some merciless pleasantry," said the notary, with concentrated rage; "nothing can move you—nothing! What must I do?—speak, I pray you. I wait upon you as the meanest valet—for your sake I neglect my most important affairs—I am no longer conscious what I do. I am the object of surprise and derision to my clerks; my clients will no longer intrust me with their business; I have refused myself to several pious friends, whom I formerly received; I dare not listen to public scandal upon this total change in my habits. But you do not know, you cannot conceive of the fatal consequences which my blind infatuation may drag in its train. Are not these proofs of my sacrifices and my devotion? Do you wish for more? Speak: is it gold which you require? The world thinks me richer than I am, but I——"

"What shall I do with your gold?" said Cecile, interrupting the notary, and shrugging her shoulders. "What use have I for gold while secluded in this room? You have no invention."

"Is it my fault, that you are a prisoner? Does this room dissatisfy you? Speak; give out your commands."

"For what purpose? for what purpose? Oh! if I expected a beloved being, melted with the passion which he both inspires and shares, I should wish for gold, silk, perfumes, all the appliances of luxury and art. Nothing could be too sumptuous, too splendid, too enchanting, with which to adorn the bower of love," said Cecile, with a passionate tone which rung upon the fibres of the notary.

"Well; if you need these luxurious refinements, speak the word, and——"

"For what purpose? for what purpose? How shall I employ the frame, when the picture is absent? and the adored being, my master—where, where is he?"

"It is true!" exclaimed the notary, bitterly; "I am old, I am ugly; I can inspire nothing but disgust and aversion. She heaps upon me contempt—she scoffs at my sufferings. I have not the strength to banish her from my presence—I have only strength to endure."

"Oh! the intolerable sniveller! a lackadaisical swain, with his tears, and sighs, and complaints!" said Cecile, in a sardonic and contemptuous tone. "He does nothing but whine and despair; and he has been for ten days secluded with a young woman, in a descrted house!"

"But that woman despises me; she is armed—she is locked up!" exclaimed the notary, in a rage.

"Surmount her disdain; charm the dagger from her grasp; compel her to unlock the door—not by physical force, for that would be unavailing."

"How then?"

"By the force of your passion."

"Passion! how can I inspire it?"

"You have the heart of a sexton, in the body of a notary. You force from me pity. Shall I teach you what part to play? You are ugly: be terrible, and your hideousness will disappear. You are old: be energetic, and I will overlook your age. You are repulsive: be formidable. Since you cannot be the noble stallion, that whinners proudly, surrounded by his amorous mates, be not the stupid camel, who bends the knee and stoops his back for the burthen. Be a tiger: an old tiger, who roars in the midst of carnage, is not without his beauty; his tigress responds to him from the depth of the wilderness."

This language, which was not without savage and natural eloquence, thrilled upon every nerve of Jacques Ferrand, as he gazed upon the wild and almost ferocious expression of Cecile, who, with a heaving bosom, distended nostril, and haughty curl of her lip, fastened upon him her large, black, and burning eyes. Never had she appeared more beautiful.

"Speak, speak again!" he passionately exclaimed. "There is now sincerity in your tone. Oh! if I could——"

"What one wishes to do, he can do," said Cecile, sternly.

"But——"

"But I tell you, if you had the will, repulsive as you are, I should envy your position. If it was for me to seduce a beautiful woman, whom solitude had committed to my hands; a woman who comprehends everything because she is capable of everything; I would be restrained by no scruples, I would seduce her; and, when it was once accomplished, all that was unprepossessing before would now be converted into charms. What pride, what triumph, there would be in saying, 'I have known how to make my age and ugliness forgotten; I owe not the love which is shown to me, to compassion, to caprice; I owe it, to my courage, my spirit, my energy: I owe it, finally, to the vehemence of a passion which nothing could resist.' Yes; and if the most beautiful and graceful youths should assail the constancy of that woman, who has bowed before the tremendous energy of my love, she would scorn them all, for she knows that effeminate fops would fear to derange the 'tie' of their cravat, or the curls of their perfumed locks, in obeying her fantastic caprice; whereas, should she plunge her handkerchief into a burning furnace, she is assured that, at her beck, the dauntless tiger would plunge after it with a roar of joy!"

"Yes, yes! I would do it! I would do it! Try me! try me!" exclaimed Jacques Ferrand, in an impassioned tone.

Cecile continued, as she drew still nearer the wicket, and fastened upon the notary the dazzling and fascinating power of her magical eye: "For that woman would be well aware, that those soft and contemptible fops would hoard their gold, if gold they had, had the object of their weak idolatry some elegant caprice to gratify; or, if they were penniless, they would scruple at some slight peccadillo, in order to obtain it; whereas, her resolute tiger——"

"Would hesitate at nothing! he would sacrifice honor! fortune! principle! everything!"

"Everything?" said Cecile, placing her soft and moist palm upon the bony and hairy fingers of the notary, whose hand, passed through the wicket, grasped the door. For the first time, the soft and velvet skin of the Creole touched his own; his features suddenly changed, his frame heaved, and he drew deep respirations.

"How that woman would be beloved!" exclaimed Cecile. "If she had an enemy, she would point him out to her old tiger, and say, 'Strike!' and——"

"He would strike!" said Jacques Ferrand, endeavoring to bring his parched lips near the fingers of the Creole.

"True? would her tiger strike?" pressing gently her hand upon that of the notary.

"To clasp you in these arms, I could commit a crime!"

"Hold! master," said Cecile, withdrawing suddenly her hand, "you must now depart; I no longer recognize you as the same being; I fear I am beginning to forget your ugliness. You must leave me;" and she retired demurely from the wicket.

The artful creature knew how to impart to her final gesture, and her farewell words, an appearance of real feeling that was almost incredible. Her look, at the same time passionate, surprised and softened, seemed to indicate, most naturally, her spite at having, for a moment, forgotten the hideousness of her admirer; that he, transported with a frantic hope, exclaimed, while grasping the bars of the wicket, "Cecile! Cecile! return, I pray you! give orders to your tiger!"

"No, no, master," said Cecile, retreating still further from the wicket; "and, to lay the devil who tempts me, I am going to sing a song of my country. Master, do you hear? The tempest rages without—the winds are unchained; what a delightful night for two lovers seated by a blazing fire!"

"Cecile, return!" exclaimed Jacques Ferrand in a suppliant tone.

"No, no—presently, when I can do so with less danger to myself; but the light of this lamp pains my vision, a soft languor weighs down my eyelids. I know not what new emotion agitates me; a partial obscurity would please me more; I feel that I am in the twilight of pleasure;" and Cecile went to the mantelpiece, extinguished the lamp, and took a guitar from the wall where it was suspended, and revived the blaze of the fire, which illuminated the apartment. From the narrow wicket where he remained immovable, this picture was presented to Jacques Ferrand's gaze. In the midst of the luminous circle formed by the trembling light of the fire, Cecile, in a voluptuous and abandoned position, reclined upon the sofa, of pink damask, and struck her guitar with some harmonious preludes. The fire threw a rosea te hue upon the languishing form of the Creole, which appeared dazzlingly bright, compared with the general obscurity of the room. To complete this picture, let the reader call to mind the mysterious appearance of a room, where the light of the fire struggles with the flickering shadows upon the walls and ceiling. The storm redoubled its violence, and its roaring was distinctly heard. While striking a prelude upon her guitar, Cecile fastened her magnetic glance upon the notary, who could not withdraw his fascinated gaze.

"Now, master," said the Creole, "listen to a song of my native country. We know not how to make verses, but adopt a simple recitative without rhyme; and between each pause, we improvise as well as we are able a symphony appropriate to the complex. It is very pastoral, and I am sure that it will please you. This song is called the 'Loving Woman.' It is her who speaks." And Cecile commenced a recitative, which owed its effect more to the expression of the voice, than the modulation

of the song. A few soft and vibrating touches upon the guitar, served as an accompaniment.

Such was the song:

"Flowers, everywhere flowers!
My lover comes! the hope of happiness lulls and enervates.
Mellow the glare of day; love seeks a softened light!
To the fresh aroma of flowers, my adored prefers the warm breath of his loved.
The flash of the sun will not wound his eyes, for my kisses will close them.
Oh! my angel! Come—my bosom heaves! My blood burns!
Come! come! come!"

These words, chanted with an impatient an ardor as if the Creole had addressed an invisible lover, were almost translated by the enchanting melody of the accompaniment; her charming fingers drew from her guitar tones of the sweetest melody.

The animated countenance of Cecile, her veiled and liquid eyes, fastened upon the notary, expressed all the burning languor of expectation. Love-burthened words, intoxicating music, passionate glances, the ideal of sensual loveliness, silence and night abroad, solitude around him; all combined to destroy the reason of Jacques Ferrand, and he exclaimed, transported with the conflict of passion:

"Have mercy, Cecile, have mercy! I shall run mad—speak no more! I wish that my reason had entirely left me."

"Hear, I pray you, the second verse," said the Creole, preluding again, and she continued her passionate lay:

"If my lover were here and touched my naked shoulders, I should thrill! I should die!
If his soft hair touched my cheeks, a purple hue would steal over their paleness.
My pale cheek would flush with fire!
Soul of my soul! If you were here, my eager lips could not speak!
Soul of my soul! If you were here—expiring—I would not for mercy cry!
Those that I love, as I love thee, I kill!
My angel, come! Oh, come, my angel! My bosom heaves! My blood burns!
Come! come! come!

If the Creole had breathed the first strophe with a passionate languor, she inspired her last words with all that love which is sung of in classic story. And as if the music was powerless to express the fiery ardor of her soul, she threw aside her guitar, and partially rising from her recumbent posture, and stretching her passionate arms toward the door where her victim was, she repeated in a languishing voice, "Oh! come, come, come!"

It would be impossible to describe the electrical spark which seemed to flash from her eyes, as she repeated these words. Jacques Ferrand gave utterance to a cry of rage.

"Death! death to him to whom you could sincerely address those burning words!" he exclaimed, shaking the door in a paroxysm of jealousy and ardor: "My fortune! my life! for one moment of that voluptuous delight which you describe in words of fire!"

Active as a panther, with one bound, Cecile reached the wicket, and as if she controlled with difficulty the affected transports, she said to Jacques Ferrand, in a low, earnest, and palpitating voice—

"Well, I confess to you, I have kindled my own passions by the ardent words of the song. I had determined not to return to this door; yet here I am in spite of myself, for methinks I hear your words echoing in my ear, 'Command me to strike and I will strike.' Do you then love me so much?"

"Do you wish for gold—all my gold?"

"No, I have gold!"

"Have you an enemy? I will kill him!"

"I have no enemy!"

"Will you become my wife? I will marry you!"

"I am married!"

"What do you wish, then? My God! what do you wish?"

"Prove to me that your passion for me is blind, and furious; that you will sacrifice everything for it."

"Everything! Yes, I will do it. But how?"

"I know not! But a moment since, the glance of your eye bewildered me. If you could at this moment give me one of those proofs of excessive love, which exalt even to delirium, the imagination of a woman, I know of nothing which I could not do for you. Hasten: to-morrow the impression may be effaced from my capricious mind."

"But what proof can I give you at such an instantaneous demand?" cried the wretch, wringing his hands. "It is an awful torture! What proof! tell me, what proof?"

"You are but a fool!" replied Cecile, retiring from the wicket, with an expression of disappointment and contemptuous anger. "I have been deceived; I thought you capable of unscrupulous devotion. Good night: I pity you."

"Cecile, do not depart from me thus: return, return! What can I do! Inform me at least, for my senses wander! what shall I do? What proof of my devotion shall I give you?"

"Search for it?"

"My God! My God!"

"I was too much disposed to yield to your fancied passion, if you had the will to profit by my ardor. The feeling may never return again."

"But only speak! speak your wishes!" exclaimed the frantic notary.

"Divine them!"

"Explain yourself! command me!"

"If you have all that passionate love which you affect, the means which you should employ, would suggest themselves. Good night!"

"Cecile!"

"I shall close the wicket instead of opening the door."

"I beseech you to listen to me."

"For one moment, I thought that my own feelings responded to your passion; but the fire is extinguished, darkness has returned; a moment since, my only thought would have been of your excessive devotion, but it has passed away; you have no energy. Good night, holy man!"

"Cecile, hear me! remain—I have found the proof!" exclaimed Jacques Ferrand, after a moment's pause, with an explosion of joy impossible to describe. The wretch was then seized with a vertigo—a cloud passed over his understanding; the blind and furious instinct of the beast drove all prudence from his mind, all precaution—the desire of self-preservation abandoned him.

"Where is the proof of your love?" exclaimed the Creole, who, having taken the stiletto from the mantelpiece, approached gently the wicket, lighted on her way by the blaze of the fire; and, without being perceived by the notary, assured herself of the security of a chain, which, attached to two hooks, would serve as a fastening to the door, even if the bolt was removed.

"Listen to me, listen to me," said Jacques Ferrand, in a hoarse and broken voice: "I place at your mercy my honor, my fortune, my life; will that proof of insane passion suffice?"

"Your honor, your fortune, your life! I do not understand you."

"If I place in your knowledge a secret which might lead me to the scaffold, willyou be mine?"

"You a criminal! you must be jesting; and your austerity—"

"A lie."

"Your probity?"

"A lie, also."

"Your piety?"

"A lie."

"You have the reputation of a saint: are you actually a satan! No, no! there cannot be a mortal so artful and audacious, that could have beguiled in such a manner the respect and confidence of his fellow-men. It would be to throw defiance in the face of society."

"That man is before you. That sarcasm have I hurled; that defiance have I cast in the face of deluded fools," said the monster, with an outbreak of ferocious pride.

"Jacques, Jacques! speak not thus!" said Cecile, with an affected tremor of voice and palpitation of the bosom; "You will overcome me."

"I will give my head for a single caress! Will you take it!"

"Now you show some proof of love. Here is my dagger: you have disarmed me."

Jacques Ferrand took with precaution the dangerous weapon from the wicket, and threw it down the corridor.

"You now believe the strength of my love, Cecile!" he exclaimed, with transport.

"Do I believe you?" said the Creole, pressing her charming fingers upon the hand of Jacques Ferrand. "I do believe you; for I discern again that glance which fascinated me. Your eyes now dazzle with a wild fire. I love that glance!"

"Cecile!"

"You should speak the truth to me."

"You will see whether I tell the truth."

"Your brow is threatening, your expression fearful; you have the ferocious beauty of an enraged tiger. But you speak the truth, do you not?"

"I have committed crimes."

"So much the better. By confessing them, you will prove to me your love."

"And if I tell you all?"

"I will grant you all; for if you have that blind and courageous confidence, I will not call the ideal lover of the song, but I will call you; you, my tiger, I will invite to 'come.'"

Uttering these last words with a luscious and ardent expression, the notary felt upon his cheek the burning and balmy breath of the Creole, and upon his finger the moist impression of her dewy lips.

"Oh! you shall be mine; make me your tiger, anything which you desire; and if you please, you may betray me, and place

my head upon the block—my honor, my life, my fortune, now are yours."

"Your honor!"

"My honor! hear me. Ten years ago, a child was confided to my charge, and two hundred thousand francs destined for its support; I abandoned the child, I forged a certificate of its death, and I have retained the money."

"Skilfully and bravely done; who would have believed it of you?"

"Listen again. I hated my cashier; one night he took from my house a small amount of gold which he returned next day, but I accused the hateful wretch of having stolen a large sum; I was believed, and he was thrown into prison. Is not my honor at your mercy now?"

"I can no longer doubt your love; to confide such secrets, proves my great ascendency over you. I shall not be ungrateful. Let me imprint a kiss upon that forehead in which so many infernal thoughts were engendered."

"Ah!" exclaimed the notary, stammering, "if the scaffold were before me, I would not hesitate. Hear me further. The child which I formerly abandoned again crossed my path, and as she inspired me with fear, I put her to death."

"You! and how? and where?"

"A few days ago, at the bridge of Asnières, near the Island of the Ravageur; she was drowned in a boat, by a fellow named Martial. Is this enough? Will you, now!"

"Demon of hell! you frighten yet fascinate me. With what tremendous energy you must be endowed!"

"Listen to me, further: I was intrusted with three hundred thousand francs; I laid a snare for the man who deposited the sum, and blew out his brains; I proved that he committed suicide, and denied the deposite, when his sister reclaimed it. Now, my life is in your hands! will you not open the door!"

"I adore you!" the Creole exclaimed, in an excited voice.

"I would now dare a thousand deaths!" exclaimed the notary, with wild excitement, which it is impossible to describe; "yes, you are right; if I was young and charming, I could not feel this thrill of joy! The key! the key! Give me the key, and draw the bolt!"

The Creole removed the key from the door, and gave it through the wicket to the notary, saying to him, with a passionate voice, "Jacques, I am subdued by you!"

"You are mine, at last!" he exclaimed, with a roar of passion, and quickly turning the key in the lock; but the door was still bolted, and could not be opened.

"Come, my tiger, come!" said Cecile, in a languishing tone.

"The bolt! the bolt!" exclaimed Jacques Ferrand.

"But, if you have deceived me!" exclaimed the Creole, suddenly; "if these secrets are but inventions of your own, to deceive me!"

The notary remained, for a moment, fixed with amazement. He had indulged the hope that his object was accomplished, and this last disappointment brought his impatient fury to a crisis. He carried rapidly his hand to his breast, opened the vest which enveloped it, broke violently a small steel chain, to which a pocket-book was suspended. He took it in his hand, and showing it, through the wicket, to Cecile, said to her, in an agitated voice, "Here is contained evidence which will place my head upon the scaffold! Draw the bolt! the pocket-book is yours!"

"Give it to me, my tiger!" exclaimed Cecile, fiercely; and drawing hastily the bolt with one hand, while she grasped with the other hand the pocket-book. But Jacques Ferrand did not release it from his hand until he perceived the door yielding to his pressure. The door, however, which yielded, opened but six inches, for it was still fastened by the chain upon the hooks. At this unforeseen obstacle, the notary rushed against the opposing door, until it trembled before his desperate strength.

Cecile, with the rapidity of thought, took the pocket-book in her teeth, opened the window, threw her cloak into the yard, and with great dexterity and courage, descended to the earth by means of a rope-ladder, which had been previously fixed to the balcony, and fell lightly as an arrow falls upon the ground.

Hastily enveloping herself in her cloak, she ran to the porter's lodge, pulled the string, opened the door, escaped into the street, and entered a carriage, which had been stationed every evening since the introduction of Cecile to the house of the notary, a few steps from his door, by the order of the Baron de Graün.

The horses started upon a rapid trot, and reached the boulevard before Jacques Ferrand had perceived the flight of Cecile.

We must now return to that monster. The situation of the door was such, that it was impossible for him to see the window which the Creole had prepared for her escape. Summoning all his strength, with a vigorous push from his broad shoulders, he finally sundered the chain which held the door. He rushed into the room, he found it deserted; the rope-ladder was still dancing from the balcony, against which he now leaned. Upon the other side of the yard, by the light of the moon, which was partially breaking from the clouds which had obscured it, he saw in the obscurity of the passage, the gate flung open.

The whole truth flashed upon his mind—one ray of hope only remained. Vigorous and resolute, he leaped from the balcony, and descended, in his turn, by means of the ladder, and rushed in haste from the premises. The street was deserted. Not an individual could be seen. He heard nothing but the distant roll of the carriage, which rapidly conveyed away the Creole. The notary concluded that it was some belated vehicle, and the circumstance made but a feeble impression upon his mind. The last hope of finding Cecile faded away; she bore with her the proofs of his crimes. As this frightful certainty broke upon him, he fell, as if thunder-struck, against a stone post near the door. He remained for a long time in that position, silent and immovable; his eye fixed and wild, his teeth tight together, and the foam oozing from his mouth, and he fastened his nails into his breast until the blood gushed forth. His mind wandered, his thoughts were deranged. When he recovered from his stupor, he was walking heavily, and with a tottering step. The objects vacillated before his vision as if he had emerged from intoxication; he closed with violence the door, which led to the street, and entered the yard. The rain had ceased. The wind, still blowing with violence, drove before it large dark clouds, which veiled, without obscuring, the light of the moon. Somewhat restored by the bracing and cool atmosphere of the night, Jacques Ferrand hoped to overcome the agitation by the rapidity and violence of his walk. He sought the muddy alleys of his garden, walking with precipitate and irregular strides, and from time to time, beating his brow with his clenched fist. He had now accidentally arrived near the end of an alley, where a green-house in ruins, was situated.

Suddenly, he stumbled violently over a heap of earth freshly turned up. He stooped down, looked mechanically at some object laying before him, and perceived that it was blood-stained linen. He found himself close to the grave which Louise Morel had dug to hide her dead child! Her child! which was also that of Jacques Ferrand! Notwithstanding his hardness of heart—notwithstanding the horrid fears which agitated him—Jacques Ferrand shuddered with fright. There appeared to him something fatal in this occurrence.

Pursued by the avenging punishment of his lust, chance had led him to the grave of his child—the unhappy fruit of his violence and his lust! Under any other circumstances, Jacques Ferrand would have trampled upon this sepulchre with atrocious indifference; but, having exhausted his ferocious energy in the scene we have related, he felt himself overcome by weakness, and sudden terror. A cold sweat burst out upon his forehead; his trembling knees gave way under him, and he fell motionless by the side of that open tomb.

CHAPTER XVIII. ..... LA FORCE.

"Error inexplicable! error unjust!
Error cruel!" WOLFRANG, *Lib. III.*

PERHAPS we may be accused, on account of the extension given to the following scenes, of endangering the *unity* of our tale by episodical descriptions; but it appears to us that, at this moment, above all, when important questions regarding penitentiary punishments—questions which touch the state of society to the very quick—are on the eve of being, if not resolved, (our legislators will take care not to do that,) at all events, discussed; it appears to us that the interior of a prison—that frightful pandemonium, that lugubrious thermometer of civilization—would be a seasonable study. In a word, the varied physiognomies of its inmates, of all classes—the relations of family or of affection, which still attach them to the world, from which the walls of the prison separate them, have appeared to us worthy of interest. We shall, therefore, be excused, for having grouped around several of the prisoners—persons already known in this history—other secondary figures destined to place in action, in relief, certain critical ideas, and to complete the initiation into a prison life.

Let us enter LA FORCE. There is nothing gloomy, nothing appalling in the aspect of this prison. In the centre of the first court-yard, you will observe several beds planted with shrubs, at the feet of which are already springing the precocious shoots of the primrose and the snow-drop; a flight of steps, surmounted by a porch in lattice-work, around which intwine the knotty branches of the vine, conduct you to one of the seven or eight promenades, allowed to the prisoners.

The immense buildings which surround these courtyards, are very similar to those of a barrack, or of a manufactory, and kept in extreme order. There are large façades of white stone, pierced with wide and lofty windows, through which circulates abundantly a pure and keen atmosphere. The tiles and the pavement around the beds are kept with scrupulous cleanliness. On the ground-floor are vast halls, warmed during winter, and well ventilated in summer; which, in the day-time, serve as places for conversation, as work-shops, or as refectories for the prisoners. The upper stories are used as dormitories, and are from ten to twelve feet high; the tiles with which they are paved are clean and shining; two ranges of iron-bedsteads furnish these rooms; the beds are excellent, consisting of a soft and thick mattress, under which is a straw one; a bolster, clean white linen sheets, and a warm worsted coverlet.

At the first sight of these establishments, uniting all the qualifications for comfort and salubrity, we cannot help feeling astonished, habituated as we are to consider prisons as gloomy, filthy, and unwholesome dens; but we deceive ourselves. That which is gloomy, filthy, and unwholesome, is such a lodging as that inhabited by poor Morel the lapidary, and by others of his class, in which so many poor and honest workmen drag out a wretched and languishing existence; often compelled to abandon their miserable pallet to a suffering wife, and with impotent despair to leave their wan and famished children, shivering with cold, huddled together upon filthy straw.

There is the same contrast between the physiognomies of the inhabitants of these two dwellings. Incessantly reflecting on the wants of his family—and which he can barely support from day to day; seeing a senseless competition lessening his wages, the laborious artisan will be sorrowful, depressed; the hour of repose sounds not for him; a species of dozing lassitude, interrupts only for a while his excessive labor; and, when waking from this painful drowsiness, he will again find himself oppressed by the same tearful thoughts for the present—the same despairing anticipations for the future. Hardened by vice, indifferent to the past, made happy by the life he leads, certain for the future—for he can insure it by committing either a crime or an offence—no doubt regretting his loss of liberty, but finding ample compensation for it in the physical welfare he enjoys; certain of carrying with him, on his leaving prison, a good sum of money, gained by a moderate and easy labor; esteemed, that is to say, feared, by his companions, in proportion to his impudence and perversity; the condemned prisoner, on the contrary, is always careless and merry.

Again we ask, what more can he desire? Does he not find in prison good shelter, a good bed, good food, high wages,* easy work, and, above and before all, *society of his own choice*—society, let us repeat it, which measures the consideration it awards him by the enormity of his crimes? A hardened convict, then, knows neither misery, nor cold, nor hunger. What signifies to him, the horror he inspires to honest people? He does not see them—he does not know them. His glory, his influence, his power among the bandits amid whom the remainder of his life is to be passed, are all derived from his crimes: how can he then fear shame? In case of grave and charitable remonstrances, which might induce him to blush for and regret the past, he hears only savage applause, which encourages him to rob and murder. He is scarcely imprisoned, before he meditates some new crime. Can anything be more logical? Should he be discovered and again incarcerated, he will again find repose, good living in prison, and his joyous and bold companions in crime and in debauchery. Should his depravity be less than that of others; should he, on the contrary, manifest the slightest remorse, he would be exposed to atrocious railleries, to infernal hootings, and to dreadful menaces. In short—and this is of so rare occurrence, that it has become the exception to the rule—supposing that a convict comes out of this frightful pandemonium, with the firm intention of returning to the right path by prodigies of industry, of courage, of patience, and of honesty, if he has been able to conceal the infamy of his past life, an accidental meeting with one of his former prison comrades, would suffice to overturn all his plans for restoration to society, which he had with so much difficulty pursued.

We will explain how this is. A hardened liberated convict, proposes an *affair* to a repentant liberated convict. The latter, in spite of dreadful threats, refuses this criminal co-partnership. Immediately, an anonymous information discloses the former life of this unhappy man, who wished at any price to conceal and expiate his past fault by honorable conduct. Then, exposed to the contempt, or at least to the mistrust of those, whose confidence he had gained by dint of labor and honesty; reduced to distress, soured by injustice, led away by want; yielding at last to his direful torments, this man, almost re-established, will fall back again into the abyss from which he had with so much difficulty escaped.

We shall therefore endeavor, in the following, scenes to demonstrate the monstrous and inevitable consequences of *promiscuous imprisonment*. After ages of barbarous experiment, of pernicious indecision, it appears now to be understood that it is not reasonable to plunge into an abominably vitiated atmosphere, people whom a pure and salubrious air can alone restore. How many ages has it taken to arrive at the conviction, that by huddling together numbers of perverted people, the intensity of their corruption is so much increased, that it then becomes incurable! How many ages has it taken to discover, that there is but one remedy for the invading leprosy which menaces the social body, and that remedy is SOLITARY CONFINEMENT!

We shall deem ourselves happy if our feeble voice might be, if not counted, at all events heard, among all those which more imposing, more eloquent than ours, demand, with such just and impatient importunity, the complete and absolute application of the separate cell system. Some day, perhaps, society will be convinced that evil is an accidental, and not an organic malady; that criminals are almost always good in their essence, but warped, and rendered malignant by the ignorance, the egotism, or the carelessness of those who govern; and that the health of the soul, as that of the body, is invincibly subordinate to the laws of a salutary and preservative system of medicine.

The man whose only share in worldly gifts consists in strength, good-will and health; has a right, a sovereign RIGHT, to see his labor justly rewarded: and in such a manner as shall insure to him, not the superfluities, but the necessaries of life; the means of remaining healthy and robust, active and laborious, honest and good: his condition will then be happy. The disastrous regions of misery and ignorance are peopled by morbid beings with withered hearts. Cleanse out these impure sewers, infuse into them the love of industry, give them equitable wages, just compensation; and instantly these sickly faces, these withered souls, will turn again to virtue, which is the health—the essence of the soul.

We will conduct our reader to the parlor in the prison of La Force. It is a dark hall, divided in its whole length by a narrow passage, shut in on both sides by open gratings. One side of the parlor communicates with the interior of the prison; this is for the prisoners. The other communicates with the office, and is for the use of stangers admitted to see the prisoners. Interviews and conversations are carried on through the double grating of the parlor, and in the presence of the keeper, who stands within the gratings at the farther end of the passage. The aspect of the prisoners that day assembled in the parlor, presented numerous contrasts: some of them were dressed in miserable clothing, others appeared to belong to the working classes; others, again, to the more wealthy of the middle classes. The same contrast of classes, nearly all of whom were women, could be remarked among the persons who came to see the prisoners. The prisoners, generally, had a less sorrowful appearance than the visitors; for this truth—strange and fatal, as it may be—is proved by experience, that neither grief, nor shame, can resist three or four days' imprisonment, *where general intercourse* among the prisoners is permitted. Those who are most shocked at first, at this hideous communion, soon get reconciled to it. The contagion gains upon them: surrounded by degraded beings, hearing only the most infamous language, a species of savage emulation drags them on; and, whether it be to overawe their companions, by striving to exceed them in their shamelessness, or to drown reflection by this moral intoxication, the new comers almost always pretend to as much depravity and insolent levity, as the old inhabitants of the prison.

Let us return to the parlor. Notwithstanding the subdued murmurs of different conversations, carried on in an undertone, from one side of the passage to the other; prisoners and visitors, after some little practice, managed to understand each other—if they were careful not to allow their attention to be distracted by the voices of their neighbors, which created a sort of secrecy, even amid this humming interchange of words; each being obliged to listen, but not to hear a word, excepting those particularly addressed to him.

Among the prisoners called to the parlor by the visitors, the farthest from the place where sat the keeper, was Nicholas Martial. To the sullen depression which he had evinced on his arrest, had succeeded a morose assurance. The contagious and detestable influence of *promiscuous imprisonment* had produced its effect. Doubtless, had he been immediately placed in a solitary cell, this wretch, still under the influence of his first depressions, face to face with the recollection of his crime, alarmed at the punishment which awaited him, would have experienced, if not repentance, at least a salutary dread, which nothing would have dissipated; and who knows what unceasing meditation might have

* High wages—when one reflects that, his expenses being all paid, the convict can earn from five to ten sous a day. How many workmen are there, who can lay by such a saving!

effected upon a guilty mind, when forced to revert, continually, to the crimes he had committed, and their punishment?

Far from this, being thrown among a crowd of bandits, in whose eyes the slightest signs of repentance were a cowardice, or rather, a *treason*, which must be dearly expiated—for, in their hardened ferocity, in their brutal mistrust, they regard, as capable of being a spy upon their actions, every man who, sorrowful and sullen, regrets his fault, does not partake their audacious carelessness, and shrinks from contact with them:—thrown, as we have said, amid these bandits, Nicholas Martial, having long since known, and by tradition, the habits of a prison, soon overcame his weakness, and desired to appear worthy of a name already famous in the annals of robbery and murder.

Some old offenders, caught a second time, had known his father, of guillotine celebrity; others, his brother, who was at the galleys. He was received, and instantly patronized, with savage interest, by these veterans in crime. This fraternal welcome from murderer to murderer, raised the pride of Nicholas; these praises, given to the hereditary wickedness of his family, quite intoxicated him. Soon forgetting, in this hideous elation, the fate which menaced him, he only remembered his past crimes, but to glorify himself in them, and to exaggerate them in the eyes of his companions.

The expression of Martial's features was as insolent as that of his visitor's was agitated and alarmed. This visitor was father Micou, the receiver of stolen goods, of the passage of the Brasserie; in whose house Madam de Fermont and her daughter, victims of the cupidity of Jacques Ferrand, had been obliged to conceal themselves.

Father Micou well knew what penalties he had incurred, for having oftentimes purchased, at low prices, the produce of the thefts of Nicholas, and many others. The son of the widow having been arrested, the receiver found himself almost at the discretion of the bandit, who could point him as the habitual purchaser of his stolen goods. Although this accusation could not be sustained by conclusive proofs, it might nevertheless, be very dangerous, and much to be dreaded by father Micou; and he had, therefore, instantly executed *the order* which Nicholas had transmitted to him, by a liberated thief, who was leaving the prison.

"Well! how goes it, father Micou?" said the brigand to him.

"At your service, my good fellow," eagerly replied the receiver. "On seeing the person you sent to me, I instantly set to work to execute your commissions."

"That is talking to the purpose, father Micou—I knew you would not forget your friends, And my tobacco?"

"I have delivered two pounds in the office, my brave boy."

"Is it good?"

"Of the very best."

"And the ham?"

"That is delivered also, with a four-pound white loaf. I added a little surprise, which you did not expect—half-a-dozen hard eggs, and a fine Dutch cheese."

"That's what I call acting like a friend—and the wine?"

"There are six bottles, sealed; but, you know, they will not allow you more than one bottle a day."

"I can't help that—I must put up with it."

"I hope that you are satisfied with what I have done, my boy?"

"Certainly. I shall be so again, and I shall always be so, father Micou; for this ham, this cheese, these eggs, and this wine, will only last till they are swallowed—but when they are finished, there will be more, thanks to father Micou, who will give me sweetmeats when I am good and behave pretty."

"How? do you wish——"

"That, in two or three days, you send me a fresh supply of provisions, father Micou."

"May the devil burn me, if I do! It's very well for once."

"For once! Ham and wine are always good; you know that well."

"That's possible; but I am not bound to feed you with such delicacies."

"Oh! father Micou! this is not right; it is unjust. Refuse me ham! who have so often taken *tripe** to you!"

"Hold your tongue, you rough rogue!" said the receiver, alarmed.

"No! I will submit the question to the *curious*;† I will say to him, 'Only think, father Micou——'"

"Well! well!" exclaimed the receiver, seeing, with as much fear as anger, that Nicholas was disposed to take advantage of the power he had obtained by their *complicité*; "I consent; I will renew your provisions as soon as they are out."

"That's right; nothing but right. Do not forget either to send the coffee to my mother and to Calebasse, who are at Saint Lazare: they used to take a cup every morning, and they would miss it."

"Still more! why, would you ruin me, you scoundrel?"

"Well, as you please, father Micou; let's say no more about it. I will ask the *curious* if——"

"Well, go it for the coffee," said the receiver, interrupting him; "but may the devil fly away with you! cursed be the day that I first knew you!"

"My old one, with me it's quite the contrary. At this moment I am quite delighted to be acquainted with you: I venerate you as my *foster*-father."

"I hope you have nothing more to order me," rejoined father Micou, bitterly.

"Yes; you will tell my mother and my sister that, if I trembled when they arrested me, I do not tremble any more; and that I am now as firm as they are."

"I will tell them. Is that all?"

"Stop a minute. I forgot to ask you for two pair of worsted stockings, nice and warm: you would not wish me to catch cold, would you?"

"I wish that you may burst!"

"Thank 'ee, father Micou; that will be for by-and-by. At present, I should like some things better; I'd like to be easy, unless they should shorten me, as they did my father. I have enjoyed life, at all events."

"Your life is a nice one!"

"It is a superb one! Since I have been here, I amuse myself like a king. If there had been lamps and muskets, they would have illuminated and fired salutes in honor of me, when they knew I was the son of the famous Martial the guillotined."

"How very tender!—fine relationship!"

"Yes, indeed! there are plenty of dukes and marquises—why should we not have our nobility as well as they?" said the brigand, with savage irony.

"Yes! it is *Charlot*" who gives you, in the palace-square, your letters of nobility."

"It certainly will not be the priest. A better reason than that; being in prison, we must belong to the nobility of the *haute-pégre*,† to have some pleasure; without that, they think nothing of you—you should see how they treat those who are not *noble de pégre*. Look ye! there is here just now, called Germain, a little young man, who puts on his airs, and pretends to despise us. Let him take care of his skin; he is a sneaking fellow, and they suspect he is a *sheep*—if that is the case, they'll nibble his nose for him, by way of notice."

"Germain! is the young man called Germain?"

"Yes; do you know him? he is of the pégre then, in spite of his innocent looks."

"No: I don't know him; but if he is the Germain I have heard of, he is in a good way."

"How?"

"He has already missed falling into a trap that Velu and the big cripple had laid for him."

"What was that for?"

"I don't know—they said that in the country he had denounced one of their gang.‡

"I was sure of it; Germain must be a sheep; they will eat the sheep. I will tell our friends that—it will give 'em an appetite. But tell me, does the big cripple keep on playing tricks to your lodgers?"

"God be thanked, I am rid of that villainous rascal!—you will see him here either to-day or to-morrow."

"Let's be joyful, we shall have good fun—he is one that is not sulky."

"It is because he will find Germain here, that I said the young man is in a good way—if it's the same."

"What made them grab the big cripple?"

"For a robbery committed with a freedman, who wished to live honestly, and work. Ah! I dare say! the big cripple worked him famously, he has so much vice, that beggar! I am sure that it was he who broke open the trunk of those two women, who live in the closet in my fourth story.

"What women? Ah! yes!—two women; the youngest of whom set you on fire, old brigand, so pretty did you think her."

"They will not set any one else on fire; for, by this time, the mother must be dead, and the daughter not much better. I shall be in for a fortnight's rent; but, may the devil burn me, if I give a centime to have them buried. I have had losses enough, without

* Stolen lead. † Judge.

* The executioner. † Great thieves.

‡ It will be remembered that Germain, brought up to crime by a friend of his father, the Schoolmaster, having refused to assist in a robbery which they wanted to commit on the banking-house in which he was employed at Nantes, had informed his master of the plot laid against him, and had gone to hide himself in Paris. Some time afterward, having met in that city the wretch, of whom he had refused to be the accomplice at Nantes, Germain having been dogged by him, had nearly been the victim of an ambuscade. It was to escape a new danger that he had left the rue du Temple and kept his new lodgings a secret.

counting the little niceties which you beg me to give to you and your family. I am in luck, this year."

"Bah! bah! you are always complaining, father Micou; you are as rich as Cœsus—but, do not let me detain you any longer."

"That's lucky!"

"You will bring me news of my mother and Calebasse, when you come with the provisions?"

"Yes! I suppose I must!"

"Ah! by-the-by, I had almost forgotten; while you are about it, buy me a new cap, of Scotch velvet, with a tassel; mine is now worn out."

"You must be joking, sure."

"No, father Micou; I will have a Scotch velvet cap. It's my fancy."

"But you are furiously bent upon bringing me to ruin."

"Look you, father Micou, don't get in a passion: it is either yes or no. I do not want to force you—but, enough said."

The receiver of stolen goods, feeling that he was at the mercy of Nicholas, and fearing to be assailed by new demands if he prolonged his visit, rose to go away. "You shall have your cap," said he; "if you ask for anything more, you won't get it, happen what may: you will lose as much by it as I."

"Be easy, father Micou; I will only *make you sing* enough to keep you in practice, so that you mayn't lose your voice; 't would be a pity, you sing so well."

The receiver left the place, shrugging his shoulders with anger, and the keeper made Nicholas return into the prison. At the moment that father Micou left the parlor, Rigolette entered it. The keeper, a man of forty years of age, an old soldier, with a rough and energetic countenance, was dressed in a close coat, pantaloons, and cap of blue cloth; two silver stars were embroidered on the collar, and also on the skirts of his coat.

On seeing the grisette, the face of this man brightened up, and showed an expression of affectionate kindness; he had always been struck with the grace, the pretty ways, and touching kindness with which Rigolette consoled Germain, when she came to the parlor to converse with him.

Germain, also, was not a prisoner, like the common run; his reserve, his mildness, and his melancholy, inspired with lively interest the officers of the prison—an interest which they, however, took great care not to evince toward him, as it might have exposed him to bad treatment by his hideous companions, who, as we have said, looked upon him with distrust and hatred.

The rain was falling in torrents; but thanks to her thick clogs and umbrella, Rigolette had courageously braved the wind and storm.

"What a dreadful day, my poor young lady," said the keeper, kindly to her; good heart is necessary, at least, to come out in such weather."

"When you keep thinking all the way on the pleasure you are about to give to a poor prisoner, you do not mind how the weather is, sir, I assure you."

"I need not ask who you are come to see."

"Surely not—and how is my poor Germain?"

"Look you, my dear young lady, I have seen many prisoners in my time; they were melancholy, very melancholy, for a day or two; and then, little by little, they became as merry as the rest; and those who were most sorrowful at first, often became the gayest in the end. Not so with Mr. Germain; he gets more and more gloomy every day."

"It is that which afflicts me so grievously."

"When I am on duty in the courtyard, I observe him without letting him perceive it; he is always alone. I have already told you that you should advise him not to isolate himself so much—that he should rouse himself, and speak a little to the others, or he will become a bug-bear to them. The jail yards are well guarded, but an unlucky blow is soon given."

"Oh! Heaven! sir, is there more danger for him?" exclaimed Rigolette.

"Not exactly; but these bandits see that he is not one of them; and they hate him because he seems proud and honest."

"And yet I recommended him to do as you now tell me, sir, and try to speak with the least wicked among them; but he cannot bring himself to it, he cannot overcome his repugnance to them."

"He is wrong, quite wrong; a quarrel is soon got up."

"Oh, good Heaven! but could he not be separated from the rest?"

"Two or three days ago, when I perceived their bad intentions toward him, I advised him to place himself *a la putole;* that is to say, in a room by himself."

"Well?"

"There is one thing that I did not think of. One whole row of cells cannot be used, because it is included in the repairs now making to the prison, and all the others are occupied."

"And these wicked men are capable of killing him," cried Rigolette, her eyes filling with tears; "but suppose, by accident, that he had good friends, what could they do for him?"

"Nothing more than to obtain for him that which the prisoners who can pay for it obtain, a room à la putole."

"Alas! he is lost then—if they in the prison hate him so bitterly."

"Calm yourself, my dear young lady, they shall be closely watched; but I say again, advise him to become a little more familiar. It is only the first step which is disagreeable."

"I will do everything in my power to persuade him; but to an honest and good heart, it is so hard, do you see, to be familiar with such people."

"Of the two evils, we must chose the least. Well; I will go and call Mr. Germain. But yes, indeed, now I think of it," said the keeper, "there are only two visitors left; wait till they are gone—no more will come to-day, for it is two o'clock. I will then call Mr. Germain; you can then talk more at ease. I might even when you are alone, let him go into the passage, so that you would be separated by only one railing instead of two—that 's so much gained."

"Ah! sir, how good you are! how thankful I am to you!"

"Hush! take care you are not heard—it might make them jealous. Sit down yonder, at the end of the bench; and as soon as that man and woman are gone, I will go and call Mr. Germain."

The keeper then went to his post, in the centre passage. Rigolette seated herself sorrowfully on the end of the bench appropriated to visitors. While the grisette is waiting for Germain, we will allow our readers to listen to the conversation of the prisoners, who had remained in the parlor when Nicholas Martial left it.

CHAPTER XIX. ..... PIQUE VINAIGRE.

THE prisoner who was standing by the side of Barbillon, was a slim and mean-looking man of about forty-five years of age, but with an expressive, intelligent, jovial, and sarcastic physiognomy: he had an enormous mouth, almost without teeth. As soon as he began speaking, he kept turning from right to left, as is customary with people who are in the habit of addressing the populace in public squares and places. His nose was flat; his head immoderately large, and almost completely bald; he wore an old, gray, knitted waistcoat, pantaloons of an almost indescribable color, torn and patched in a thousand places; his feet, reddened by the cold, and half-wrapped up in old rags, were ornamented by a pair of wooden shoes. This man, whose name was Fortuné Gobert, surnamed Pique Vinaigre*, formerly a juggler, a liberated convict, after having been condemned for the crime of issuing counterfeit money, was now charged with robbery, committed during the night, by breaking into a house, after escalading a wall. He had been confined at La Force only a few days, and he already filled, to the general satisfaction of his prison companions, the profession of story-teller. At the present day, story tellers are more scarce; but formerly, every ward had, usually, for a trifling individual contribution, its official story-teller; who, by his improvisations, amused and shortened the apparently interminable winter evenings; the prisoners being locked up, for the night, at sundown. If it is curious to revert to this craving for fiction and touching recitals, which is always to be met with among these unhappy wretches, it is a subject of great importance in the eyes of the thinking. These people, corrupted even to the marrow—these thieves, these murderers, prefer, above all, stories in which generous and heroic sentiments are expressed; recitals in which weakness and goodness are delivered from ferocious oppression.

It is the same with those poor lost women; they are singularly prone to reading simple, touching, and elegiac romances; and almost always reject obscene books. The natural instinct for good joined to the desire of escaping from the thought of the degradation in which they live, creates in the minds of these unfortunate women, those sympathies, and those intellectual repulsions, of which we have just spoken.

Pique Vinaigre excelled, then, in this kind of historical recital, in which weakness, after a thousand misadventures, ends by triumphing over its persecutor. He possessed, also, in an eminent degree, a fund of sarcastic irony, which had gained for him the surname which he bore; his repartees being often sardonic or funny.

He had just come into the parlor. Opposite to him, on the other side of the grating, was seen a woman of about thirty-five years old. Her face was pale, mild, and interesting. Poorly, but decently dressed, she was weeping bitterly, and held her handkerchief to her eyes.

Pique Vinaigre looked at her with mixed feelings of impatience and affection. "Look! now, Jeanne," said he, "do not be so

* Sharp Vinegar.

childish; it is now sixteen years since we saw each other. Keeping your handkerchief over your eyes, is not the way for us to recognize each other."

"My brother! my poor Fortuné! I am suffocating! I cannot speak!"

"How droll you are—eh! But what's the matter with you?"

"What is the matter with me? How can you ask! I find you in prison again. You have already been in once fifteen years."

"That's true! It is exactly six months to-day, since I came out of the central prison of Melun. I did not go to Paris to see you, because the Capital was forbidden to me."

"Taken again, already! What have you done, then? Why did you leave Beaugency, where you had been sent under surveillance."

"Why? you ought to ask me why I went there?"

"You are right."

"First of all, my poor Jeanne, as these gratings are between us, imagine that I have embraced you; that I have folded you in my arms, as a brother ought to do, upon seeing his sister, after an eternity of absence. That being all over, we can talk. One of the prisoners at Melun, who was called the big cripple, had told me, that there lived at Beaugency, a released galley-slave of his acquaintance, who employed liberated prisoners in a factory, where they made white lead. Do you know what manufacturing white lead means?"

"No, brother."

"It is a very pretty trade; those who follow it, after a month or two catch the lead cholic. Out of three *cholicked*, one is sure to go to kingdom come; but, by-the-by, I must speak the truth, the other two die also—but at their leisure—they take more time; they make much of themselves, and last about a year longer, or eighteen months at the most. Excepting that, the trade is not so badly paid as others; and there are people born to good luck, who can last it out two or three years. But these are the ancients, the centenaries of the white-leadians. One dies of it, to be sure; but it is not fatiguing."

"Why did you choose so dangerous a trade, my poor Fortuné?"

"And what would you have had me do? When I entered Melun, for that counterfeit money business, I was a juggler. As in the prison, there was no work-shop appertaining to my profession, and as I am not stronger than a flea, they set me to work to manufacture children's toys. It was a Paris manufacturer, who found it advantageous to allow the prisoners to get up his dolls, his wooden trumpets, and his sabres. Sabres of wood! Well may I swear by them, for how many of these toys have I filed, pierced and cut, during fifteen years! It was, above all, in trumpets, that I distinguished myself; and the rattles, too! With two of those instruments, I flatter myself, you would have set on edge the teeth of a whole battalion! The term of my imprisonment being up, I left Melun, a past-master of the penny trumpet order. I had liberty to choose my place of residence, from only three or four country towns, forty leagues from Paris. My only resource was my great knowledge of toy-making. Well, then, admitting, that from the grand-papas down to the very babies, every inhabitant of the village had a passion to play *too-loo-too-loo*, upon my trumpets, I should still have had enough to do to earn my living; but I could not expect to inspire a whole population with such a love for music, as to be trumpeting from morning till night—besides, I should have been considered as a peace-breaker, and——"

"Good heaven! you are always laughing."

"It is better than weeping. Finally, seeing that at forty leagues distance from Paris, my profession as a juggler would not be much more serviceable to me than my trumpets, I asked permission to remove to Beaugency, wishing to engage myself with the white-leadians. It is a sort of pastry which gives you indigestion, but till you die of it, you live by it, and that's always so much gained, and, besides, I liked that trade quite as well as that of robber. I am neither strong enough nor brave enough to be a robber, and it is by mere chance that I committed the *thing* of which I will speak to you presently."

"Had you been bold and strong enough, you would have determined not to steal."

"Ah! you believe that, you?"

"Yes; for at the bottom, you are not wicked. In that unfortunate affair of the counterfeit money, you were dragged into it in spite of yourself; almost forced into it, as you well know."

"Yes, my girl, but look you: fifteen years passed in a central prison, would turn a man as black as this nose-warmer* here, even had he gone into the jail as white as a new pipe. When I came out of Melun, I felt that I was too much of a poltroon to rob."

"And you had the courage to undertake a deadly trade? I tell you what, Fortuné, you wish to make yourself appear worse than you are."

"Stop a little. Although a mere shadow of a man, I took it into my head—and the devil fly away with me if I know why! that I should cheat the lead-cholic; that the malady would not find enough in me to bite upon, and that it would pass on elsewhere; finally, that I should become one of the old white-leadians. On coming out of prison, the first thing I did, as you will readily imagine, was to receive my cash, which was increased by what I had gained by telling stories in the evening in the ward."

"Such as you used to tell us long ago, brother? How much they used to amuse our poor mother! do you recollect?"

"Do I not? excellent woman! And before she died, she never suspected that I was at Melun?"

"Never, even to her last moments she believed that you had gone to the West Indies."

"How could I help all this, my girl? It was the fault of my father. All the education that he gave me was to fit me to be a mountebank, a clown, to help him in his feats of juggling and legerdemain; to swallow tow, and vomit fire; which was the reason that I could not, in learning, vie with the sons of our nobility, and that I got into bad company. But, to return to Beaugency—when I had once got out of Melun, I gathered my cash together, as I told you. After being caged up fifteen years, a little air is necessary to brighten up one's spirits; and, besides that, without being a glutton, the white lead might give me an irrecoverable indigestion—in that case, let me ask you, of what use could have been the money I had earned in prison? At length I arrived at Beaugency almost without a penny. I inquired for Velu, the friend of the big cripple, the proprietor of the manufactory. Your servant! there was not a shadow of the white-lead factory left—eleven persons had died there within a year—the old galley-slave had shut up shop. There I was, in the centre of that town, and with my talent for making trumpets as my last resource, and with my certificate of a discharged felon, as my only recommendation. I seek employment according to my strength, and I had no strength; you will readily imagine how I was received. Thief on one side, beggar on the other, an escaped jail-bird; in short, wherever I presented myself, everyone put his hands upon his pockets; I could not, therefore, prevent myself from dying of hunger in such a hole, and where, moreover, I was bound to stay five years. Seeing this, I broke my ban, intending to return to Paris to employ the talents I possessed. As I had not the means of riding in a carriage with four horses, I set off as a beggar, asking alms along the road, avoiding the gens d'armes as a dog would a stick. I had good luck—I had arrived without mishap in the neighborhood of Auteuil—I was fatigued, and hungry as a wolf—I was dressed, as you may see, not very fashionably"—and Pique-Vinaigre let a jeering glance fall on his ragged garments—"I had not a penny in my pocket—I might have been arrested as a vagabond—an opportunity offered, the devil tempted me, and, notwithstanding my cowardice——"

"Enough! brother—enough!" said his sister, fearing that the keeper, though at some distance from Pique Vinaigre, might hear this dangerous confession.

"You are afraid I may be heard," rejoined he; "don't be alarmed, I do not conceal it: I was taken in the fact; there was no chance of denying it. I have acknowledged all. I well know what awaits me—my account's made up."

"My God! my God!" exclaimed the poor woman, weeping: "with what coolness do you speak of this!"

"And were I to speak of it ever so warmly, what would I gain by it? Come, come—be reasonable, Jeanne; is it for me to console *you*?"

Jeanne wiped away her tears, and sighed.

"To return to my affairs," added Pique Vinaigre; "I arrived near Auteuil at dusk: I was fatigued to death. I could venture into Paris but at night. I had seated myself behind a hedge to rest myself, and to think over plans for my campaign: by dint of thinking, I fell asleep. A sound of voices awakened me: it was quite dark. I listened—it was a man and woman, who were talking in the road on the other side of the hedge. 'What nonsense! who do you think would come to rob us? have we not, a hundred times, left the house alone?' 'Yes,' replied the woman, 'but we had not then a hundred francs in our chest of drawers.' 'Who knows it?' said the husband. 'You are right,' said the woman; and off they went.

"I' faith, the opportunity was too good to be missed: there was no danger. I waited till the man and woman had gone some distance, before I ventured to come out from behind the hedge. I walked forward, and looked about. I saw a small peasant's house—this must be the one of the hundred francs; there was but this one on the road. Auteuil was about five hundred paces off. I said to myself, courage, old fellow—there is no one there: it is dark—if there is no watch dog—you know I was always afraid of watch dogs—the thing is done. Happily, there was no dog; but, to

* Short pipe.

make quite sure, I knocked at the door—no answer; this encouraged me. The shutters on the ground floor were closed; I passed my stick between them, and wrenched them open: I entered by the window in a room; there was still a little fire in the chimney, which gave me light enough. I saw a chest of drawers, of which the key had been taken out. I took the tongs from the fire-place, and forced open the drawer; and, under a quantity of linen, I found the money, wrapped up in an old worsted stocking. I did not stop to take anything else; I jumped out of the window, and I fell—guess where! here was a chance!"

"Tell me, then—tell me."

"On the back of a gamekeeper, who was returning to the village."

"What a misfortune!"

"The moon rose; the game-keeper saw me coming out of the window: he caught hold of me. He was a fellow who would have eaten ten like me—too much of a coward to resist, I gave myself up. I had still the stocking in my hand; he heard the money jingle; he took it all, stuffed it into his game-bag, and compelled me to follow him to Auteuil. We arrived at the Mayor's house, accompanied by a troop of ragged boys and gensd'armes; they sent people to the house, to wait the return of the proprietors. On their arrival, they made their declaration—there was no need of denying it—I acknowledged everything, and I signed the process verbal. They put handcuffs on me, and marched me off."

"And here you are in prison again, for a long time, perhaps?"

"Listen, Jeanne; I will not deceive you—I may as well tell you all at once."

"What! have you more to tell me? Oh, heavens!"

"Come, come; take courage!

"But speak, then."

"It is no longer a question of prison."

"What can you mean?"

"On account of my relapse, climbing and breaking into an inhabited house by night—the lawyers told me that my account is settled: I shall have fifteen or twenty years in the galleys, and pillory into the bargain."

"The galleys! and you so weak! it will kill you," cried the unhappy woman, sobbing hysterically.

"And if I had taken service with the white-leadians?"

"But the galleys! my God! the galleys!"

"It is a prison in the open air, with a red jacket instead of a brown one; and then, I have always had great curiosity to see the ocean. What a complete cockney I am, eh?"

"But the pillory! unfortunate fellow! to be exposed to the contempt of all the world! Oh, my God! my God! my poor brother!" and the unhappy woman again burst into tears.

"Come, come, Jeanne, do n't give way so: it is but an unpleasant quarter of an hour to pass—and I believe, moreover, that one is seated—and then, am I not accustomed to appear before a crowd? when I was playing my juggling tricks, I always had lots of people round me; I shall fancy that I am playing some of my legerdemain tricks; and, should I find it too disagreeable, I can shut my eyes; and then it would be as if no one was looking at me."

Though speaking with so much barefaced indifference, this unfortunate man wished rather to encourage and console his sister, than to affect a criminal insensibility to his position. To a man accustomed to a prison life, and who is necessarily dead to every sense of shame, the galleys is, in fact, only a change of condition—*a change of jacket*—as Pique Vinaigre said, with hideous truth.

A great many of the men confined in central prisons, even prefer the galleys, on account of the noisy and animated life they lead there; and often make attempts to murder, for the express purpose of being sent to Brest or to Toulon.

This is easily understood. Before going to the galleys, they had nearly as much work to do, at their own trades.

The condition of the most honest laborers in the seaports, is not less severe than that of the galley-slaves. They go into the work-shops, and leave them, at the same hours. In fine, the truckle-beds on which they repose their wearied limbs, are often not more soft than those of a galley-crew. It may be said, they are free; yes! free one day in the week—the Sunday—and that day, is also one of repose to the galley-slave!

But, then, they are not exposed to shame; they are not branded. And what is shame or being branded to these wretches, who every day harden their souls in infamy, in this school of mutual perdition, where the most criminal are the most respected?

Such, then, are the consequences of the present system of penal punishments. Incarceration is looked upon as a boon; the galleys often sued for.

"Twenty years imprisonment in the galleys! My God! my God!" reiterated the poor sister of Pique Vinaigre.

"But, Jeanne, be comforted. They will only give me my money's worth. I am too weak to be put to hard work. Though there are no manufactories of trumpets and wooden swords, as at Melun, they will give me some easy work. They will employ me in the infirmary. I am not refractory. I am of an easy nature. I shall tell stories there, as I do here. I shall conduct myself so as to be adored by my commanders, esteemed by my companions; and I will send you carved cocoanuts and straw-boxes, for my nephews and nieces; in short, the wine is drawn, and must be drank."

"If you had only written to me, that you were coming to Paris, I would have managed to conceal you, and to lodge you, till you had found work to do."

"I had intended to go to you, but I wished rather to arrive with full pockets; for I see, moreover, by your dress, that you do not keep your carriage. And, by-the-by, how are your children, and your husband?"

"Do not speak of him!"

"Always a rattling fellow, but still he is a good workman."

"He gives me much uneasiness. I had trouble enough of my own, without having those which your misfortunes cause me."

"How! Your husband!"

"He left me three years ago, after having sold all we had in the house, leaving me and my children without a penny, a straw mattress being all our furniture."

"You had not told me that?"

"To what purpose? It would only have vexed you."

"Poor Jeanne! How then have you managed, alone, and with three children?"

"Indeed, I have suffered much. I worked by the piece as fringe-maker, as much as I could. My neighbors helped me a little, and took care of my children when I went out; and I, who have not often had a chance, I was fortunate once in my life. But it did not avail me anything, on account of my husband."

"How was that?"

"My employer had spoken of my troubles to one of his customers, and had told him how my husband had left me penniless, after selling all our furniture; and that, in spite of this, I worked with all my might to bring up my children. One day, on returning home, what do I find? My rooms now furnished, a good bed and linen for it was there. It was the charitable gift of my employer's customer."

"Excellent customer, my poor sister! Why did you not write to me, to let me know the misery you were in? Instead of spending my earnings, I should have sent you the money."

"Do you think I would have taken money from you—a prisoner?"

"Undoubtedly. I was boarded, lodged, and warmed at the expense of Government. What money I earned was all profit; knowing my brother-in-law to be a good workman, and you, both a good workwoman and manager, I felt quite easy; and kept adding to my hoard with my eyes shut and my mouth open."

"My husband was a good workman, doubtless: but he got spoilt by bad company. Thanks to this unexpected assistance, I summoned up my courage. My eldest girl began to earn something. We should have been happy but for the grief of knowing you were at Melun. The work went on. My children were neatly dressed; they hardly wanted for anything. This gave me good heart. At last I had been able to lay by thirty-five francs, when all at once my husband reappeared. I had not seen him for a twelvemonth. Finding me comfortably lodged, and well clothed; he, without ceremony, took my savings; installed himself in my rooms, would not work, got drunk every day, and beat me when I complained."

"The wretch!"

"That is not all. He brought home a bad woman with whom he lived, and lodged her in a small room in my apartment. I was compelled to suffer even this; for the second time he began, little by little, to sell all I had. Foreseeing what was about to happen to me, I called upon a lawyer who lived in the house, and asked him what I ought to do, to prevent my husband from reducing me and my children to beggary?"

"The answer was very plain, that you should shove your husband out of doors?"

"Yes: but it seems I had not the right to do so. The lawyer told me that my husband could dispose of everything, as *chief of the community*, and install himself in the house, without working if he pleased; and that I must submit to it. That the circumstance of his having a mistress living under the same roof, gave me the right of demanding a separation of property, bed and board, as they call it. And this would be the more easy, as I had witnesses who had seen my husband beat me. That I could bring an action against him, but that it would cost me, at least, four or five hundred francs to obtain my separation. Only think, it is about as much as I can earn in a whole year. Where

could I borrow such a sum? And then, borrowing is not the serious question! you must pay it back again. Gracious! five hundred francs: and all at once? 't is quite a fortune!"

"There is, however, a very simple way of saving up five hundred francs," said Pique Vinaigre, with a bitter smile. "It is to hang up one's stomach for a year; to live upon air all that time, and work just as hard. It is astonishing the lawyer did not advise you to do that."

"You are always joking."

"I am not joking this time!" exclaimed Pique Vinaigre, indignantly; "for it is infamous, that the law should be too dear for poor people. Here you are, a good and worthy mother of a family, working with all your might to bring up your children honestly. Your husband is a confirmed, worthless rascal! he beats you, swears at you, pilfers from you, spends at the wineshop all your hard-earned money. You apply for justice, you ask for protection, that you may keep from out the grip of an idle scoundrel your own and your children's bread. The lawyers tell you, 'Yes, you are right; your husband is a good-for-nothing fellow: justice shall be done to you; but that justice will cost you five hundred francs—almost as much as is necessary to keep you and all your children during a year.' Observe now, Jeanne; all this proves, as the proverb says, 'That there are only two classes of people in the world—those who are hanged, and those who deserve to be.'"

Alone and thoughtful, having no one she could address, Rigolette had not lost a word of the melancholy story of this poor woman, in whose misfortunes she already felt a lively interest. She determined to relate all she had heard to Rodolphe, as soon as she should see him, feeling quite confident he would instantly assist her.

CHAPTER XXI. ..... COMPARISON.

Rigolette, being deeply interested in the melancholy fate of Pique Vinaigre's sister, could not take her eyes off her, and was about to draw a little closer to her, when, unfortunately, a fresh visitor coming into the parlor, asked for a prisoner, who was sent for, and sat himself down upon the bench between Jeanne and the grisette. The latter, on seeing this man, could not restrain a gesture of surprise, almost of fear. She recognized in him one of the two bailiffs who had come to arrest Morel, when putting into execution the writ obtained against the lapidary by Jacques Ferrand. This circumstance recalling to Rigolette the remorseless persecutor of Germain, redoubled her sorrows, which had been somewhat diverted from her mind by the touching and painful conferences between Pique Vinaigre and his sister.

Moving as far from her new neighbor as the bench would permit her, the grisette leaned back against the wall, and gave herself up once more to her own afflicting thoughts.

"Look you, Jeanne," rejoined Pique Vinaigre, whose jovial and sarcastic looks had suddenly become gloomy; "I am neither strong nor courageous; but if I had happened to be there, when your husband so tormented you, it would not have passed off so quietly between him and me. But you, also, were too soft with him."

"What would you have had me do? I was obliged to suffer what I could not prevent! As long as he found anything in the house to sell, my husband sold it, to go to the wineshop with his mistress;—everything, even to the Sunday dress of my little girl."

"But your daily wages;—why did you give them to him? why did you not hide them from him?"

"I hid them, but he beat me so much, that I was obliged to give them to him. But I should not have yielded to the blows so easily, had I not feared that he might injure me so seriously that I should not be able to work for a long time. He might break an arm, thought I, and then what would become of me? Who would take care of—who would feed my children? If I should be obliged to go the hospital, they would die of hunger. You will comprehend, brother, that I preferred giving my money to my husband, rather than to be beaten, and perhaps wounded, that I might remain *fit for work*."

"Poor woman! well, they talk of martyrs—it is you who have been a martyr!"

"And yet I never did harm to any one. All I wished for was to be capable of working, to support my husband and my children. But what would you have? In this world there are happy and unhappy people, as there are good and wicked ones."

"Yes; and it is perfectly astonishing how happy the good are! But, finally, are you altogether rid of this beggar of a husband?"

"I hope so; for he did not leave me till he had sold my very bedstead, and the children's cradle. But when I think that he wished even to do worse——"

"What is it you mean?"

"Though I say he, it was rather that wretched woman who urged him on; and that is why I mention it to you. One day he said to me, 'When in a family there is a pretty girl fifteen years of age, like ours, how stupid it is not to profit by her beauty.'"

"Ha! Now I understand you! After having sold the clothing he would have sold the bodies!"

"When he said that, Fortuné, my blood forsook my heart, and I must do him the justice to say, that the reproaches which I heaped upon him, made him blush for shame. But as his wicked mistress chose to meddle in the dispute, and told me that my husband might do as he thought fit with his own daughter, I rated the wretch so roundly that my husband beat me; and since that scene I have never set my eyes on them."

"Do you know, Jeanne, that there are many men condemned to ten years' imprisonment, who have not done so much to deserve it as your husband? They only rob from strangers—he is a precious rascal, this husband of yours!"

"And yet at bottom he is not so wicked, brother; he has been led astray by his wild, drinking companions."

"Yes; he would not hurt a babe, but a girl grown up is quite another thing."

"Well, it can 't be helped; we must e'en take life as we find it. My husband once gone, I no longer feared being lamed by an unlucky blow: I mustered courage once more. Not having wherewith to buy another mattress; for first of all, one must eat and pay one's lodging; and between both of us, my eldest daughter, my poor Catherine, and I, we could earn scarcely forty sous a day, my other two being too young to work—well, instead of a mattress, we slept upon a straw bed, gathered from the refuse of a packer's store who lived in the same street with us."

"And I spent my prison earnings!—I spent my prison earnings!"

"How could you help it? you did not know of my trouble, for I did not write to you about it. Well, we redoubled our labors, Catherine and I, poor child! If you knew how gentle, industrious, and good she is—always looking at me to see what I wish her to do; never complaining, and yet she has already seen enough of the misery of this world, although she is only fifteen years old—that consoles me for many sufferings. Look you, Fortuné, to have such a child," said Jeanne, wiping her eyes.

"She is a picture of yourself, as far as I can judge. This is a consolation which, at least, you ought to have."

"I can assure you, I grieve much more for her than for myself. For the last two months she has not ceased working for a moment. Once a week she goes out to wash in the boat of the Pont-au-change, at three sous an hour, the little linen which my husband has left us. All the rest of her time she is chained to the house, like a poor dog. We must acknowledge that she has known misfortune too soon. I know that it must come sooner or later, but, at least, there are some people who enjoy two or three years of tranquillity. That which afflicts me a great deal in addition to all this, is, that I cannot assist you, my poor Fortuné, in any way. However, I will try——"

"Oh, yes! do you think that I would accept of anything from you? On the contrary, instead of asking a sous for every pair of ears that listens to my stories, I will ask two; or they must do without the tales of Pique Vinaigre; and that will help you a little in your housekeeping. But now I think of it—why do you not go into furnished rooms; in that way your husband could not sell anything."

"Furnished! But recollect there are four of us; they would ask us at least twenty sous a day. What should we have left to live upon? while, on the contrary, our present room costs us only fifty francs a year."

"Well, well; as you please," said Pique Vinaigre, with bitter irony. "Work till your fingers bleed, to get a little furniture about you; and then, as soon as you have laid by something, your husband will rifle you of all again, and some fine morning he will sell your daughter, as he has sold your clothes."

"Oh! as to that, he should kill me first. My poor Catherine!"

"He will not kill you, and he will sell your poor Catherine. He is your husband, is he not? He is the *chief of the community*, as the lawyer told you. As long as you are not legally separated, and as you have not even five francs to give for that, you must take it patiently. Your husband has the right to take your daughter from you, and when he pleases. If once he and his mistress determine on the ruin of this poor child, will she not be obliged to submit?"

"My God! my God! can such infamy be possible? There is, then, no justice!"

"Justice! justice!" cried Pique Vinaigre, bursting into a sardonic laugh. "It is like meat; it is too dear for poor people to eat it. If they want to send them to Melun, to put them in the pillory, or to throw them into the galleys, that is quite another affair—that is a justice which they give them *gratis*. If they take their heads off, they do it *gratis*—always *gratis*. Tumble up and take your tickets, gentlemen," added Pique Vinaigre, in his showman's tone. "It is not ten sous, two sous, one sous, a centime, that they will cost you: no, gentlemen; they will cost you the small trifle of—nothing. They are within everybody's reach. You have only to give your heads; the cutting and curling is at government expense. This is *gratis* justice. But that justice which would prevent a worthy mother of a family from being beaten, and despoiled by a scoundrelly husband, who wishes to make money of his daughter's shame and can do so—that justice costs *five hundred francs*, and you must manage to do without it, my poor Jeanne."

"Oh! Fortuné!" said the unhappy mother, bursting into tears. "Your words wound me to the soul."

"It is because I am wounded also—I am wounded to the soul when I think of your fate, and that of your family—and in feeling that I can do nothing for you. I always appear to be laughing; but do not deceive yourself: I have two sorts of laughter, Jeanne, my gay laugh, and my mournful laugh. I have neither the strength nor the courage to be wicked, passionate, or full of hatred, as the others—it always breaks out with me in words, more or less funny. My cowardice and my weakness have prevented me from becoming worse than I am. It required the singular chance of an isolated house, in which there was not a cat, and above all, not a dog, to tempt me to commit the robbery. It fell out also, by accident, that the moonlight was magnificent—for in the dark, and alone, I have the devil's own fears."

"It is that which has always made me tell you, my poor Fortuné, that you are better than you think yourself—and, therefore, I trust that the judges will take pity upon you."

"Pity for me! for me? a liberated convict, who has committed a new crime? Yes, reckon upon that! After all, I shall bear them no ill-will—whether I am here, there, or elsewhere, is all one to me. Truly, Jeanne, you are in the right! I am not spitefully wicked; and those who are so I hate after my own fashion, and make game of them. I suppose, that from being so long accustomed to relate histories—in which, to please my auditors, I always manage that those who torment others, from sheer cruelty, receive in the end a famous thrashing—I have accustomed myself to have those feelings which I describe to you."

"Do they like such histories? those terrible people with whom you are, my poor brother? I should never have expected that."

"The deuce! If I were to begin telling them a story of a fellow who robs, or kills to rob, and is caught at last, and guillotined, they would not let me go through with it; but when a woman or a child is concerned, or, for instance, a poor weak devil like myself, who you might knock down by blowing upon, is pursued with extreme hostility by a blackbeard, who persecutes him for the mere pleasure of persecuting—FOR HONOR, as they say—oh! then they dance with joy, when at the end of the story the blackbeard receives his pay. Hold: I have particularly a story, called Gringalet and Coupe-en-deux, which was the delight of the central prison at Melun, and which I have not yet related here. I promised it for this evening, but they will have to put a large sum into my contribution-box, and you shall profit by it; besides, I will write it down for your children. Gringalet and Coup-en-deux will amuse them, take my word for it; men might read it without blushing, so you can give yourself no uneasiness."

"In short, my poor Fortune, what consoles me not a little is, that you are not so unhappy as others, owing to your disposition."

"If I were like one of the prisoners who belongs to our ward, I should bring some calamity upon myself. Poor fellow! I am very much afraid that before the day is through, he will bleed from some side or other. It is growing red-hot for him; there is some bad plot arranged against him for to-night."

"Good Heavens! do they wish to injure him? Don't meddle with that, at least, Fortune."

"I'm no such fool; I might catch some of the splashing myself; it was only that I happened to be walking about among them, that I heard anything about it. They spoke of gagging him in order to stop his noise; and also to prevent his execution from being seen, they wished to make a circle about him, while they were pretending to listen to some one who was reading a newspaper aloud."

"But why do they wish to maltreat him in that manner?"

"As he is always alone, and speaks to nobody, and looks as if he was disgusted with his companions, they imagine that he is a spy, which is a very foolish idea; for if he was a spy, he would thrust himself among them. But the secret cause of their hatred is, that he looks like a gentleman, and that is what offends them. It is the captain of the dormitory, who is called the ambulating skeleton, that is at the head of the plot. He is as furious as the devil after that poor Germain—that is the name of their black-beast. They must settle their own affairs; it 's their own look out, and I can do nothing to help it. But you see, Jeanne, all this comes from being sad in prison; you are suspected at once; and I take good care not to place myself in suspicion's way. But look ye, my girl, we have chatted enough; go home and see if I am there. I am breaking in upon your time by keeping you here. As for myself, I have nothing to do but talk; but time is another sort of commodity with you. So good-bye: come here occasionally, you know I shall always be glad to see you."

"A few moments more, my brother, I pray you."

"No, no! your children are waiting for you. I hope that you have not told them that their dear uncle is boarding here."

"They believe that you are in the West Indies, as my mother did, formerly, so that I am able to speak to them about you."

"That is so much the better; but go away, go quick."

"Yes; but hear me, my poor brother: I am not rich, but I cannot leave you in your present condition; you must be so cold with no stockings, and that miserable vest; Catherine and I will make you some clothes. You may believe, Fortuné, that it is not the disposition to assist you, which is wanting."

"What? what clothes? I have trunks full of them! and as soon as my luggage arrives, I shall have enough to dress like a prince! Come, laugh a little, now! What, wont you laugh? Seriously, my girl, I wont refuse your offer, while waiting Gringalet and Coupe-en-deux, to fill my box, and then I will return you anything which you advance. Farewell, my Jeanne: when you come here again, I will forfeit the name of Pique Vinaigre, if I don't make you laugh. Now go home; I have already kept you too long."

"But hear me—hear me! my brother."

"Here, my brave fellow!" sung out Pique Vinaigre, to the keeper, who was seated at the other end of the passage. "I have finished my confab, and should like to go back. I have chatted long enough."

"Ah! Fortuné, it is n't kind for you to send me away in this manner."

"On the contrary, it is the kindest thing I can do for you at present. Come, good-bye! keep up your courage, and to-morrow morning, tell your children that you had a dream about their uncle, who is in the West Indies, and that he asked you to kiss them. Farewell!"

"Farewell, Fortuné!" said the poor woman, with her face bathed in tears, as she saw her brother go back to the interior of the prison.

Rigolette, since the officer had taken a seat by her side, had been unable to overhear the conversation of Pique Vinaigre and Jeanne; but she had not removed her eyes from the poor sister, forming in her own mind, the determination of learning her address, in order to make available her recommendation to Rodolphe, as she had at first determined to do.

When Jeanne arose from the bench to leave the parlor, the grisette approached her timidly, and said: "Madam, a few moments since, I overheard you say, without intending to listen to you, that you were a fringe-maker."

"Yes, mademoiselle," replied Jeanne, somewhat surprised, but predisposed in favor of Rigolette by her charming face, and its benevolent expression.

"I am a mantua-maker," said the grisette; "and as trimmings and fringes are now in fashion, I frequently have customers who inquire for them; I have thought it would be cheaper to apply to a manufacturer, and that I could pay you more than your employer does."

"It is true, mademoiselle; if I could purchase silk upon my own account, I could realize a small profit. It is very kind in you to think of me. I cannot conceive why you take so much interest."

"Well, madam, I will speak to you frankly. I am waiting for the individual whom I came to see; having no one to converse with before that gentleman placed himself between us, I heard you—unintentionally I assure you—speaking to your brother of your sorrows and of your children. I said to myself, 'poor people should help one another.' The thought then occurred to me, that I could be useful to you in some respect, since you are a fringe-maker. If, indeed, what I have proposed suits you, here is my address. Give me yours, so that I may know where to find you, when I have any orders to give;"

and Rigolette gave one of her cards to the sister of Pique Vinaigre. The poor woman, quite moved by the kindness of the grisette, said to her with an overflowing heart: "Your face did not deceive me, mademoiselle; and, excuse my vanity, there is a resemblance between you and my eldest daughter, and that was the reason that I looked to you so attentively when you first came in. I thank you: if you employ me you will be pleased with my work, for I will do it faithfully. My name is Jeanne Duport, and I live in rue de la Barillerie, No. 1."

"No. 1; that is not difficult to remember. Thank you, madam."

"It belongs to me to thank you, my dear mademoiselle. You are so kind to think of being useful to me. I cannot conceive the motive which moved you."

"It is very simple, Madam Duport," said Rigolette with a charming smile. "Since I resemble your daughter's character, what you call my kindness ought not to surprise you."

"What a sweet girl you are, my dear mademoiselle! I confess that, thanks to you, I shall go home with a lighter heart than I anticipated, and we may perhaps meet at this place again, for I suppose that you come here like myself to visit a prisoner."

"Yes, madam," replied Rigolette with a sigh.

"I hope that we shall meet again, Mademoiselle Rigolette," said Madam Duport, casting her eye upon the card.

"Farewell, Madam Duport." 'I know at last the address of that poor woman,' thought Rigolette, as she returned to her bench, 'and I am very sure that Mr. Rodolphe will take an interest in her, when he knows how unhappy she is, for he has always told me, that if I knew of any one very miserable, to apply to him;' and resuming her situation, Rigolette awaited with impatience the conclusion of the man's conversation, who was seated next to her, in order to be able to send for Germain.

A few words upon the scene which has just transpired. We are unfortunately obliged to confess, that the miserable brother of Jeanne Duport, had legitimate reasons for his indignation. His assertion that the law was *too dear for the poor*, was the truth. The pleadings before the civil tribunals are enormously expensive, and beyond the means of the artisans, who find it difficult to support life upon their meagre wages.

Supposing that a mother, or father of a family, belonging to that class who are invariably sacrificed, wished to obtain a separation of bed and board. Suppose that there is no question as to their legal right to such a separation—is it in their power to obtain it? No. For there is not a laborer who is able to spend four or five hundred francs, for the onerous formalities of such a decree; and yet, all his pleasures are centered in domestic life. The exemplary or the dissipated conduct of the head of a laborious family, is not a question of morality, but a question of bread. Does the fate of a wife like the one we have attempted to describe, deserve less interest than that of a wealthy lady, who suffers from the infidelity of her husband? Nothing is more worthy of compassion, than the griefs and trials of the heart. But when an unhappy mother finds the misery of her children added to those griefs, is it not monstrous, that her poverty should place her beyond relief of the law, and deliver herself and family defenceless into the merciless hand of a cruel and dissolute husband? Such, however, is the case; and a felon in this respect, as well as in many others, may impeach the impartiality of those institutions, in the name of which he is sentenced. Is it necessary for us to speak of the dangers which result from justifying such acts? What will be the influence—what the moral authority of those laws, which are absolutely subordinate to a question of money? Should not civil justice as well as criminal, be accessible to all? When people are too poor to invoke the salutary and preservative benefits of a law, should not society itself secure the application of its provisions, out of respect to the honor and repose of families?

But let us leave this woman, who will, for life, be the victim of a cruel and worthless husband, because she is too poor to enforce, by law, the separation to which she is entitled. Let us now allude to the brother of Jeanne Duport. This liberated convict emerges from a den of corruption into the world; he has paid his penalty; he has liquidated his debt by expiation. What precaution has society taken to prevent his relapse into crime? Not any. Has it, by any charitable provision, rendered his return to virtue possible, in order that he may be *justly* punished severely, if he shows himself incorrigible? No; the contagious perversion of your jails is so universally known, so rationally dreaded, that he who emerges from one of them, is an object of scorn and frightful aversion. However excellent he may be, he cannot find anywhere an employment. Besides, your withering surveillance follows him to small villages, where his past life becomes necessarily known, and where he will have no means of exercising that exceptionable industry, often imposed upon the prisoner by the contractor of the central prisons. If the liberated convict has sufficient firmness to withstand temptation, he will surrender himself to some of those destructive trades which we have already mentioned; to the preparation of certain chemical ingredients, the manufacture of which decimates* the operatives employed; or, if he has sufficient strength, he can employ himself in quarrying stones in the forests of Fontainebleau, where the average duration of the operative is six years. The situation of a liberated convict is, therefore, more painful, more trying, encompassed with more difficulties, than it was previous to his first fault. He moves, surrounded with obstacles and dangers; he is compelled to brave disgust, contempt, and often the most frightful misery. If he falls a victim to all these temptations to guilt, if he commits a second crime, you show yourselves a thousand times more severe than toward his first fault. This is a gross injustice, for it is the necessity which you have created that forces him into this second crime. Yes; for it has been demonstrated, that your penitentiary system, instead of reforming, corrupts; instead of meliorating, degenerates; instead of healing slight moral diseases, it renders them incurable. The aggravated punishment which you inflict upon a second crime is, therefore, iniquitous and barbarous, since that repetition of guilt is forced upon the convict by your penal institutions. The terrible punishment which is hurled at those who repeat their offence, would be just and reasonable, if the tendency of your prisons was to purify and elevate those who are committed to them; and if, at the expiration of their term of sentence, a return to honesty was possible. If the reader is astonished at these contradictions in the law, what will be his surprise, when he compares certain offences with certain crimes, either in respect to their inevitable consequences, or to the degrees of punishment inflicted for their commission? The conversation of the prisoner whom the officer came to visit, will present us with one of these afflicting contrasts.

CHAPTER XXI. ..... MASTER BOULARD.

THE prisoner who entered the parlor at the time Pique Vinaigre left it, was a man of about thirty years of age, with a jovial and rubicund face, and of a medium size, which rendered his extraordinary corporosity more remarkable. This fat and florid prisoner was enveloped in a warm gray frock-coat, with pantaloons and gaiters of the same stuff, and a cap of red velvet, called *a la Perinet Leclerc*, and very warm and furred slippers. Although the fashion for wearing seals had long since passed away, from his gold chain dangled a large number of them, adorned with precious stones; and several rings shone on the red coarse hands of this prisoner, who was called Master Boulard, a bailiff accused of an abuse of trust. The man who had called to see him was Pierre Bourdin, one of the officers charged with the arrest of Morel, the lapidary. Bourdin was shorter, and fully as corpulent as the bailiff, and modelled, according to his means, after his patron, whose style and magnificence he admired. Having, like his friend, a taste for jewelry, a superb topaz breast-pin adorned his shirt, and a long gold chain appeared and disappeared through the button holes of his vest.

"Good day, my faithful Bourdin, I was sure you would be present at roll-call," said Master Boulard, joyfully, with a piping and effeminate voice, that contrasted singularly with his large body and broad rubicund visage.

"What! fail at roll-call? I am incapable of it, general." It was by this familiar, and at the same time, respectful title, that Bourdin addressed the bailiff, under whose orders he served. The same military designation is frequently used by certain classes of artists and practitioners.

"It gives me pleasure to see that friendship is faithful to misfortune," said Master Boulard, with cordial gayety; "and yet I must confess, that I was beginning to doubt your constancy, for it is now three days since I wrote to you, and no Bourdin appeared."

"My apology, general, would be a long story. Do you remember that dashing Viscount, of the rue Chaillot?"

"Saint Remy?"

"Precisely. You remember how he laughed at our arrest."

"Yes; his frivolity was indecent."

"Malicorne and I would have been stupefied by it, were that possible."

"To stupefy you and Mr. Malicorne is not possible."

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* We have been assured, that means have been recently discovered, by which the lives of those condemned to these awful trades, may be preserved. See Memoir descriptive of a new mode of manufacturing white lead, by M. J. N. GANSAL.

"Thank you, my general; but the fact is, that this gay Viscount has increased his titles."

"Has he become a count?"

"No, no! from a swindler he has become a thief."

"You don't say so!"

"They are following his tracks for some diamonds which he has stolen. And by the way, the jewels belonged to the artist who employed Morel, the lapidary, whom we were going to pounce upon in the rue du Temple, when a tall fellow, with a black mustache, footed that starveling's bill, and was on the point of kicking down stairs Malicorne and myself."

"Oh! yes, yes! I remember, you related the affair to me, my poor Bourdin; it was a laughable scene! the best part of the whole was, that the old portière dashed on your backs a kettle full of boiling soup."

"You may well say so, general; the kettle of the old witch broke at our heels, as we were running down stairs."

"Yes; but it will count up upon your report of services and wounds. But what has become of the dashing Viscount?"

"I was telling you that Saint Remy was pursued for theft, after he had duped his good-natured old father with the pretence of blowing out his brains. A police-officer, a friend of mine, who was aware that I had once been on the tracks of that fop, asked me if I couldn't put him on his footsteps again. I had learned too late, when the other arrest was in our hands, that he was burrowed at the farm of Arnouville, and I went there after him, but the bird had flown from his nest."

"Besides, he shelled over the next day for those drafts, thanks to some great lady, it is said."

"Yes, my general; but it is all the same thing. I know the nest where he had concealed himself, and he might have been hid in the same place a second time, and that is what I told my friend, the police-officer; and he proposed to me to volunteer as an amateur, and to conduct him to the farm: as I had nothing on hand, I accepted. 'T was a mere pleasure excursion into the country."

"Did you find the Viscount?"

"Not he! After we had wandered and searched the house, we were obliged to return as wise as we went; and this is the reason, general, why I have not come to receive your orders before."

"I was very certain that something imperious prevented you from obeying my request, my honest fellow."

"But can you tell me, without indiscretion, how the devil you happened to be caged here?"

"A set of rascally clowns, who pretend I have swindled them out of the paltry sum of sixty thousand francs—a mere trifle—accused me, and had me arrested for breach of trust; and have forced me to abdicate my office."

"That is unfortunate, general: shall we then no longer serve under your orders?"

"I am now under half-pay, my brave Bourdin."

"But who are these desperate enemies of yours?"

"The most savage of them is a liberated thief, who intrusted me with a note for seven hundred francs to collect, and for which it was necessary to commence a suit. I got possession of the money, and in consequence of a failure in some operations of mine, I squandered the sum, as I have many others before it; but the rabble barked and yelped after me so loud, that a writ was served on me, and here I am, no more nor less than a malefactor."

"It makes me sweat, general."

"The most curious part of the whole affair is, that the liberated thief wrote me the other day, that the seven hundred francs was the sum which he had laid by for a rainy day, and that the day having come, (what does the devil mean?) I would be responsible for any crimes which he might commit to save himself from starvation."

"That's charming, upon my honor."

"Is it not? Nothing more convenient than such an excuse for the rogue! Fortunately, the law does not allow of any such responsibility."

"After all, it is only of an abuse of trust of which you are accused, my general."

"Certainly: did you take me for a thief, Master Bourdin?"

"No, indeed, my general; I meant that there was nothing serious in the accusation. 'Tis n't enough to whip a cat for!"

"Do I look, my brave fellow, as if I were in despair!"

"Not at all—not at all. I never saw you in better case. Supposing you are condemned: it will only be two or three months' imprisonment, or twenty-five francs' fine. I know the code."

"And I am confident that I shall obtain permission to spend those two or three months very comfortably, in some hospital. I have one deputy under my thumb."

"In that case, you are safe."

"I cannot help laughing, Bourdin, at those fools who sent me here: they never will see a sous of the sum which they claim. To be sure, they have obliged me to give up my commission. It is a duty which I owed my predecessor, as you say. You see that those stupid fellows will be the turkeys of the joke, after all, as Robert Macaire says."

"I think just so myself, general; they will be the sufferers, after all."

But let me speak of the objects, my dear fellow, which induced me to send for you. It is an affair in which the ladies are concerned," said Master Boulard, with an affectation of mystery.

"General, you always were a rogue; what is to pay now? Rely upon me."

"I am particularly interested in a young actress, of the Follies Dramatiques. I pay her rent, and she repays me in love—at least, she makes me think so. But you know, my good fellow, the absent are often deceived; and I should like to know whether I am an exception to the rule—whether my Alexandrine—for that is her name—is faithful to me. She has applied to me for funds, and I do not like to be made a fool of. I should, therefore, like to know, before I shell out the coin, whether she deserves my generosity, by her constancy. I know there is nothing more stupid, more vulgar, than such fidelity; but it is a weakness, to which I confess that I am a victim. You would, therefore, confer a great favor upon me, my dear comrade, if you would keep an eye upon my lass, and, either by applying to the portière of Alexandrine, or by some other means, inform me what I am to believe."

"Enough, enough, my general," replied Boudrin, interrupting the bailiff: "you could not have applied to a more skillful man. I am accustomed to play the spy upon a creditor. Rely upon me. I shall know whether Mademoiselle Alexandrine erases anything from the contract—which does not seem to me to be very probable; for, without flattery, general, you are a handsome man, and too generous, not to be adored by the women."

"However handsome I may be, my dear Bourdin, you must consider that I am absent, and that is a very serious set-off; in short, I rely upon you to ascertain the whole truth."

"You shall know all about it, I assure you."

"Ah! my dear comrade, how shall I express to you my gratitude?"

"Come, you are jesting, general."

"It is well understood, my brave Bourdin, that in this affair, your remuneration will be the same as in an arrest."

"My general, I will not suffer that. As long as I have been under your orders, you have always suffered me to spear the debtor to the quick, double and treble the costs of arrest; and you stood up for the costs, with as much obstinacy, as if they had been your own."

"But, my dear comrade, this is an entirely different affair. It is now my turn; and I will not permit you——"

"Allow me, general, to offer this information as a feeble proof of my gratitude; you will humiliate me, if you do not."

"Well, then, I will not contend with you about a point of generosity. Besides, your devotion will be a sweet reward for the freedom which I allowed you in our business affairs."

"That is the manner, general, in which I wish that it should be understood. Can I not serve you in any other way? You must be very uncomfortable here—you, who think so much of the luxuries of life. You have private rooms, I hope?"*

"Certainly: and I arrived here just in season. I obtained the last vacant room. The others are in a part of the prison which they are repairing. I settled down very comfortably in my cell; and I am not very unpleasantly situated. I have a stove—I sent for a good arm-chair—I take three good long meals—I digest well, and I sleep well. With the exception of the trouble which Alexandrine gives me, I am not much to be pitied."

"But you, who are so fond of good living, must find the cooking here execrable."

"Was not the restaurateur, who lives in this street, created, as one might say, for my exclusive benefit? I have opened an account with him, and he sends me excellent fare every day. And, by the by, since you wish to do me a favor, I wish you would ask that nice little Madam Michounean, who is no worm-eater, I tell you——"

"Ah! rogue—arrant rogue as ever, my dear general!"

"Come, come, my dear comrade; none of your wicked jibes," said the thief, with a slight degree of affectation; "I am only a good customer and a good neighbor; nothing more. Ask Madam Michounean to put in my basket for to-morrow, a good pie, of pickled tunny fish, for it is now just the season for them; the dish will be good by way of variety, and it provokes drink also."

"An excellent idea."

* The accused, who can afford it, are allowed this privilege.

"And let Madam Michounean send me a basket of claret, champagne, and burgundy, like the last which she sent, and add to it two bottles of her 1817 brandy, and a pound of pure Moca, just burnt and recently ground."

"I will write down the date of the brandy, so as not to forget it," said Bourdin, pulling his wallet from his pocket.

"And since you are so kind, my comrade, have the goodness to take a note to my lodgings, and ask for my eider-down coverlet."

"I will punctually execute all your commissions, my general. I am relieved from my anxiety about your living, but in your walks do you associate pell-mell with the bandits?"

"Yes; and it's a very gay and animated scene, I assure you. I leave my rooms after breakfast, and go, sometimes into one room, sometimes into another, and as you say, I mingle among the rabble; it is *Regence*, it is *Porcheron*; they seem to be a very honest set of fellows, and are very amusing. The most refractory among them are confined together, in what is called the lion's den; what gallows-faces they have! There is one fellow called the skeleton, who is a very curious specimen, I assure you. I never saw a man like him."

"He has a curious name."

"He is so thin, so fleshless, that the name is well deserved; he is a frightful rascal, I assure you; he is the captain of his ward, and has just left the bagnio, since which he has committed a robbery and a murder. His last crime was so horrible that he is confident that he will be sentenced to death, without mercy; but he do n't care a snap for it."

"What a brigand!"

"All the prisoners here admire him, and tremble in his presence. I insinuated myself into his good graces at once, by giving him some cigars; so he has admitted me to his friendship, and is teaching me slang. I improve daily, I assure you."

"What a joke! my general learning slang from a skeleton!"

"I tell you, this is not such a bad place, after all; these fellows adore me! some of them even say '*thou*' to me! I do n't keep myself at a distance, like a young fellow called Germain—a poor beggar, who can't afford a private room, and who tries to affect disquiet, and to pretend that he is a great lord."

"He must have been delighted to meet with a man of your genteel appearance, to converse with, if he is so disgusted with the rest of them."

"Pshaw! he did n't appear to notice who I was; but even if he had, I should have frowned upon his advances. He is the *black beast*, the speckled bird of the prison; they will play him some devilish bad trick sooner or later, and I have no disposition, I assure you, to share the aversion which is felt for him."

"You are quite right."

"It would spoil my recreation; for my walk among the prisoners is actually a pleasant promenade, only I cannot say that the brigands have a just estimate of my *moral* worth; they are not aware that I am merely accused of a breach of trust—a mere trifle among fellows of that stamp; so they look upon me as *small potatoes*, as Arnold says."

"Sure enough; compared with those desperate malefactors, you are."

"A lamb of innocence, my dear comrade. Be so obliging as not to forget my commissions."

"Depend upon me, my general: 1st, Mademoiselle Alexandrine; 2nd, the fish pie and basket of wine; 3rd, the 1817 brandy, the ground coffee, and the eider-down coverlet; you shall have all those. Do you wish for anything else?"

"Oh, yes! I have forgotten; do you know the residence of Mr. Badinot?"

"The attorney? yes."

"Well, please to inform him that I shall rely upon his kindness, to find a first rate lawyer for me to argue my cause, and that I wont scruple to pay him a fee of a thousand francs."

"I will see Mr. Badinot, depend upon it, general. I will attend to all your commands this evening, and to-morrow you shall receive everything for which you ask. Farewell, general; keep up your courage."

"Farewell, my comrade."

And the prisoner left the parlor on one side, while the visitor departed upon the other.

Let us now compare the crime of Pierre Vinaigre, the robber, with the offence of Master Boulard, the officer; examine the point from which each departed from virtue, and the temptations which led each to the commission of crime; compare, finally, the punishment which was in reserve for both these violators of the law. The one was discharged from prison, and, as a liberated felon, inspired everywhere disgust and suspicion. He was prevented from exercising the mortal trade to which he had devoted himself; even that last resource failed. He breaks his ban, returns to Paris, expecting to conceal, in that large city, the disgrace of his past life, and secure some means of livelihood. He arrives, exhausted with fatigue, and almost starved to death; he learns that money was deposited in a neighboring house; he breaks open a window, forces a drawer, steals a hundred francs, and flies. He is arrested, thrown into prison, and will be tried and sentenced. For a second crime, fifteen or twenty years' imprisonment, and exposure on the pillory, is the penalty. This frightful punishment he deserves.

Property is sacred. He who, in the night-time, breaks open your door to steal your goods, should be visited with the whole vengeance of the law. It will be in vain for the guilty wretch to plead the want of labor, poverty, starvation, and perils innumerable, to which, as a liberated convict, he was exposed; the excuse will have no weight. The law has but a single eye. Society, for its safety and repose, has armed it with unlimited power, and requires it to visit audacious attacks upon property, with merciless severity. Yes; this miserable, despised and dangerous thief—this desperate rascal, who has repeated his crime, deserves all the penalty which the law can inflict.

What, then, will that man deserve, who, intelligent, rich and influential—invested, moreover, with an official character, has stolen, not for the purpose of clothing his nakedness, or of satisfying his hungry maw, but to tempt the chances of stock-jobbing, to adventure upon some speculation; who has not stolen a hundred francs, but a hundred thousand—a million? He has not stolen in the night, and risked his life by a burglary, but has robbed in the face of day, in the sight of everybody. He has not robbed a stranger, who committed his money to the safeguard of a lock, but a client, who has been compelled to rely upon the probity of a public officer, whom the law has appointed, and for whose confidence the law vouches. What punishment does he deserve, who steals—not a small sum to supply his necessities, but an enormous amount, to waste on his luxuries! Would it not be gross injustice, to inflict upon him the same penalty which is inflicted upon the liberated convict, who was goaded to his crimes by hunger, poverty, and wretchedness? No, no, says the law; we must not inflict the same penalty upon a respectable man as upon a vagabond! 'T would be a shame. What! compare a breach of trust to a felony! Disgraceful!

What answer will Master Boulard make, who perfectly agrees with the law? "In virtue of the power which my commission conferred upon me," he will say, "I have received certain sums, I have squandered every farthing. Am I a beggar, a penniless rascal? No! thanks be to God, I have still enough to live comfortably upon. I had higher and loftier aims than becomes a beggar. Provided with your money, I launched forth into speculations; I might have doubled and trebled the sum, if fortune had smiled upon me; but it proved otherwise, and I have lost as much as yourselves."

The law seems to say, "What has this gay, lively, off-hand, defalcation—which happened in broad daylight—in common with burglarious forcing of locks, in the dead of night, with false keys, wrenches, and crowbars, and uncouth and felonious tools of that description, which are never employed, except by people of the lowest classes?" Crimes seem to change their character and their names, when perpetrated by that class of persons, whom the law seems to take into special favor. When a miserable wretch, steals a loaf of bread from a baker's shop, by breaking a window; or a chambermaid, robs her mistress of a handkerchief or a louis, the crime is called a theft, under aggravated circumstances, and the reprobate called before the Court of Assizes.

The proceeding is just, particularly in the case last mentioned. The servant who steals from his master is doubly guilty; his trust is, in a certain sense, fiduciary; he is one of the family; the house is open to him at all hours, and he basely betrays confidence reposed; it is that feature of his crime which the law visits with such deserved severity. Nothing can be more just or moral than its provisions in this respect. But let a sheriff, or a public officer, steal the money which you have been compelled to intrust to his official character, and it does not rank with a burglary in heinousness; it is not even compared with a theft by a servant; it is, in the eye of the law, no theft at all. That term is much too harsh, too disreputable, to apply to the offence; it is called an *abuse of confidence*; more decent and respectable in its signification; better adapted to the rank of the swindler, to his social situation, to the position in society of him who has committed this delinquency; it is not named by that severe and brutal appellation—crime.

Another important distinction is made: a crime is tried before the Court of Assizes, an abuse of confidence before the *Correctionnelle* police. What a climax of equity is this! A servant

steals a louis from his master—a famished man breaks a window to steal a loaf of bread—the law pronounces these offences crimes, and condemns the criminal before the Court of Assizes. A public officer squanders a million—it is called an abuse of confidence, and submitted to the police *correctionnelle*. In point of fact, common sense, morality, and reason, how is this frightful discrepancy in penalty justified? How does the domestic theft upon which infamous punishment is inflicted, differ from an abuse of confidence, punished by the police *correctionnelle?* Is it because an abuse of confidence almost always carries in its train the ruin of families! What then is an abuse of confidence but a domestic theft, aggravated in a frightful degree, both by the consequences which follow, and by the fiduciary character of him who commits it! Is a burglarious theft more culpable, than a theft from an abuse of confidence? Will you assert that the violation of his oath, by a public officer, is less censurable than the breaking open of a door! Yes, says the law.

Crimes are grave in proportion as they endanger the existence of families, private security, and public confidence; and yet these very crimes are punished with the mildest penalty. So that the more knowledge, intelligence, and consideration the guilty possess, the more indulgent the law; while the most terrible and disgraceful visitations of its power, are reserved for those who, if they have not an excuse have at least, a pretext for their crimes, in their misery, want, and wretchedness. This partiality of the law is immoral, and criminally unjust. Strike without mercy, the poor who pilfer the goods of others; and smite with equal severity the public officer who abuses fiduciary relations. Let us hear no more those apologists, who justify people who have squandered trust-funds in dangerous speculations, for reasons like the following: "My client does not deny that he has misappropriated the money in question; he is also aware of what frightful distress an abuse of confidence may be the cause, that it has in this case plunged an honorable family in poverty. But what will you have! My client has been gifted with an enterprising mind; he is fond of the excitement of hazardous enterprises; and when he is once launched on the sea of speculation—when he is once smitten with the stock-jobbing frenzy; he forgets, instantly, that the property of his client does not belong to himself."

This is wonderfully consoling to those who have been robbed of their property, and singularly refreshing to those who are in a position to be so. How would an advocate be received, in a Court of Assizes, who offered an analogous defence?—

"My client does not deny that he forced open that secretary, and stole therefrom the sum in question. But what will you have? He has been gifted with a strong appetite, and a finished taste; he loves good dinners, adores women, is fond of comfort and luxury; and when he is once seized with this frenzy for pleasure, he makes no distinction between what is his own and what belongs to another."

We contend, that there is an exact analogy between the thief and the defaulter; they both violate the law with the hope of gain; and they both deny what they have gained, in order to enjoy it hereafter. But let us return to our reflections:

We are desirous that by legislative authority an abuse of confidence by a public officer, should be pronounced a theft; and that its minimum penalty should be the same with that of theft by a menial, and its maximum the same as a burglarious entrance into a house. The fraternity to which the public officer belongs, should be made responsible for the sums which he has stolen in his character of officer.

There is, moreover, an explanation which will serve as a corollary; and after the facts which we are about to quote, all comment will be unnecessary. We will only ask, whether we live in a civilized or a barbarous community. We read in the Bulletin des Tribunaux, for February 17th, 1843, the following decision of a case, in which a bailiff, condemned for abuse of confidence, had appealed:

"The court adopt the view of the case held by the first judges:

"Whereas, the documents presented for the first time before this court by the accused, do not weaken or controvert the facts established before the first judges:

"Whereas, it is proved that the accused, in his character as bailiff, has received certain sums of money belonging to his clients, and has replied to their demand for the same, by equivocation and falsehood; and finally, has converted and squandered the same, and thus abused their confidence: we, therefore, declare him guilty of the delinquency punished by Articles 408 and 400 of the penal code."

"The court condemns to two months' imprisonment, and a fine of twenty-five francs."

A few lines below, in the same journal, for the same day, we read:

"TWENTY YEARS' HARD LABOR. On the thirteenth of September last, a robbery and burglary were committed, during the night, in the house occupied by the brothers Bresson, wine-dealers, in the village of Ivry.

"It was discovered that a ladder had been placed against the wall of the house, and one of the shutters, on a window facing the street, forced by the vigorous burglar. The things stolen were less considerable in value than in number, consisting of old clothes, old sheets, worn-out shoes, and, to enumerate everything, two bottles of white absinth. These facts having been fully proved against Tellier, the accused, the attorney-general demanded, that the full punishment of the law should be awarded, particularly as this was his second offence.

"The jury having brought in a verdict of guilty, on all the charges, without any extenuating circumstances, the court sentenced Tellier to twenty years' hard labor and the pillory."

For the public defaulter, two months' imprisonment! for the recommitted convict, twenty years' hard labor and the pillory!

Do not such facts speak for themselves! What serious reflections do they suggest!

Faithful to his promise, the old keeper had gone after Germain. When the bailiff Boulard returned to the interior of the prison, the door of the passage was opened. Germain entered, and Rigolette was only separated from her friend by the light wire grating.

CHAPTER XXII.....FRANCOIS GERMAIN.

THE features of Germain were not regular, but a more interesting face was seldom seen; his manners were *distingué*, his form genteel; his dress neat but plain, consisting of gray pantaloons, and a black frock-coat, buttoned up to the neck. There were none of the marks of negligence and slovenly carelessness peculiar to prisoners, about him. His unsoiled hands showed the care which he devoted to personal cleanliness, and probably increased the aversion which the other prisoners bore toward him; for moral perverseness is almost always joined to physical negligence. His brown hair, curling naturally, was parted on the side, according to the fashion of the time, and fell low upon his pale and sad face; his fine blue eyes indicated great frankness and kindness of disposition; while his mild and melancholy smile expressed, at the same time, benevolence and habitual despondency; for, although very young, he had been the victim of severe trials. In one word, nothing could be more touching than the expression of patient resignation which was seated upon his brow. Nothing could be more honest and upright than the heart which throbbed beneath. The cause of his arrest, separated, of course, from the slanderous accusations of Jacques Ferrand, proved the excellence of his disposition; the impropriety of which he had been guilty was suggested by the excited compassion and sympathy of his nature, and, although blameworthy, was certainly pardonable, when it is considered that, on the next day, the son of Madam George was certain of refunding the sum taken from the desk of the notary, for the purpose of saving Morel, the lapidary.

Germain slightly blushed when, through the grating, he discerned the charming and blooming countenance of Rigolette. According to the custom of the kind-hearted grisette, she affected great cheerfulness, in order to inspire her friend with courage; but she found it difficult to conceal the grief and emotion which she had experienced since she had entered the prison. She was seated upon the bench by the side of the grating, and held the straw basket in her hand. The old keeper, instead of remaining in the passage, kindly departed, to take a seat near the stove, and soon fell asleep, in order to give Germain and Rigolette perfect freedom to converse about their own affairs.

"Let us see, Mr. Germain," said the beautiful grisette, placing her lovely face as near the grating as possible; "let me see whether I shall be pleased with your face or not. It is a little less sad, I think: but take care, take care; or I shall be obliged to scold."

"How kind you are, to come again to-day!"

"Again! That sounds like a reproach, I think."

"And ought I not to reproach you, for doing so much for me, who can repay you in no other way than by thanks?"

"You are wrong, sir; these visits give me as much pleasure as they can you, and the thanks are, rather, due from me. I have caught you there, uncourteous Germain, and I have a great mind to punish you for your unkind thoughts, by refusing to deliver what I have brought you."

"You are spoiling me with attentions; but I thank you from the bottom of my soul. You must excuse me for repeating so

often that word which offends you; but you give me no chance to say any other."

"You do not know, in the first place, what I have brought you."

"Well, suppose I do not."

"I think you are very polite."

"Whatever it may be, it is some new proof of your kindness, which will fill my heart with gratitude and with——"

Germain could not finish the sentence, but hung down his head, abashed.

"With gratitude—and with what besides?" asked Rigolette, blushing in her turn.

"And with regard, devotion," stammered Germain.

"And why not add, 'respect,' as you would at the bottom of a letter? You are deceiving me; you meant something besides 'regard, devotion,' for you stopped suddenly."

"I assure you——"

"You assure me, you assure me; I see through the grate that you are blushing. Am I not your little friend, your good companion? why do you hide anything from me? Be frank, and tell me everything," added the grisette timidly, for she only waited for an opportunity of confessing to Germain how much she loved him—an honest, virtuous love, which the misfortunes of Germain had inspired in her bosom.

"I assure you," said the prisoner with a sigh, "that I hide nothing from you."

"For shame, false man!" said Rigolette, stamping her little foot; "do you see this large cravat of white woollen which I have brought for you?" and she drew it from the basket; "in order to punish you for dissimulation, you shall not have it. I knitted it for you myself, for it must be cold in those large prison yards, and I thought it would be a warm and comfortable covering for your neck."

"How——"

"Yes, yes! you are very much troubled with the cold," said the grisette, interrupting him hastily; "I remember it very well, and yet you tried to prevent me from putting more wood into the stove, when you passed your evenings with me: you see, I have a good memory."

"Mine also, is, alas! too good!" said Germain in an agitated voice, and he passed his hands over his eyes.

"Come, you are going to be sad again; I positively forbid it!"

"How can I avoid being moved to tears, when I think of all that you have done for me since my imprisonment here? and this new attention of yours evinces such great kindness! Do I not know that you encroach upon your sleeping hours, in order to find time to visit me, and that for my sake you impose excessive labor upon yourself?"

"That is your way; come, pour out the flood of your pity upon me, for occasionally taking a pleasant walk to visit my friends; it is really a great hardship for one who likes nothing better than walking and looking into the windows of the shops on the way."

"Especially, on a day so stormy and blustering as the present!"

"That is an additional reason for going out; you cannot conceive of the variety of droll faces with which one meets—some hold on to their hats with their hands; others, with umbrellas that look like tulips, grin in the most laughable manner, while the rain drives into their faces. My walk this morning was a perfect comedy all the way; I thought I should make you laugh in telling you about it, but you are determined to keep your face as grave as it can be made."

"'T is not my fault, Rigolette; pardon me, I pray you, but the impressions you have made upon me, are of too serious a nature to move my laughter; you know that my happiness never exhibits itself in gayety. I cannot help it.

Rigolette did not wish to reveal, that in spite of her cheerful tattle, she shared the emotions of her companion; and she changed the conversation by hastening to say—

"You are always saying 'I cannot help it;' but there are a thousand things which you can help, that you will not do, though I have urged and intreated you to."

"What do you mean?"

"Your obstinate refusals to treat with any kind of courtesy the other prisoners, your determination not to speak to them. The keeper just told me, it would be for your interest to make an effort to be on more friendly terms with them; I am sure that you do nothing and say nothing to conciliate them, and you will excite the horrible men to do you some injury."

"But, you cannot conceive of the horror with which they inspire me; and you are not aware of the personal reasons which I have for avoiding and detesting them, and those like them."

"I believe I do know the reasons. I have read those papers which you sent me to collect when you were first imprisoned, and I learned the dangers to which you were exposed on your arrival at Paris, in consequence of your refusal in the provinces to become a confederate in the crimes of the man who brought you up, and that the last snare which he laid for you, forced you to leave rue du Temple, informing me alone of the place you intended to reside; and in those papers, also, I read something else," said Rigolette, blushing and casting down her eyes, "I read that——"

"What you never would have known," exclaimed Germain, quickly, "if this misfortune had not occurred. But I beg of you to be generous, and forgive my folly—forget that, in happier days, I indulged such rash dreams."

Rigolette had attempted, for a second time, to draw from Germain a confession of his love, by alluding to the passionate and tender thoughts which he had formerly addressed to her; for, as we have already said, from his first acquaintance with her, he had been inspired with a strong and ardent love. But, in order to enjoy the intimacy of his pretty voisine, he had concealed that love from her, under the disguise of friendship. Becoming, by misfortune, still more diffident and timid, he could scarcely conceive that Rigolette could entertain any love for a prisoner, branded with terrible accusations, and that she merely was displaying that sisterly affection which she had felt for him, before his disgrace. The grisette, perceiving how imperfectly she was understood, smothered a sigh, and waited for a better opportunity to unveil to Germain, the recesses of her heart. She continued, with embarrassment:

"I certainly understand, that the society of those wicked people inspire you with horror; but that is not a sufficient reason for braving dangers that might be avoided."

"I assure you, that in order to follow your advice, I have several times attempted to address those among them, who appeared to me to be the least criminal; but if you knew what language they use—what men they are!"

"It must, indeed, be terrible."

"What is still more distressing, is to perceive that I am accustoming myself, by degrees, to the frightful conversation which I am forced to hear, during the whole day. Yes; I listen now, with mournful apathy, to the horrid tales which, during the first days of my imprisonment, filled me with indignation; so that I begin to feel less confidence in myself," he exclaimed, with bitterness.

"What do you say, Mr. Germain?"

"By living constantly in such society, the mind, at length, accustoms itself to criminal thoughts, in the same manner as the ear becomes habituated to the vulgar words which it constantly hears. Yes; I can now easily comprehend, that a person may enter this place innocent, and leave it corrupt!"

"Yes, but not you—not you!"

"Yes, myself; and others, a thousand times better than myself. Alas! those who, before our trial, condemn us to such infamous society—can they be ignorant of its corrupting tendency? Are they ignorant that we breathe a contagious air, fatal to honor?"

"I beseech you, do not speak these words; you wound my feelings."

"You asked me the cause of my increasing despondency, and I have told it to you. I did not wish to reveal it; but I have but one way of repaying your compassion for me."

"My compassion—my compassion!"

"Yes; and that way is to conceal nothing from you. I confess to you, with terror, that I am not the same man—I do not recognize myself. In vain I despise and avoid those wretches; their presence and contact has an influence upon me, in spite of myself. It seems as if they possess the fatal power of vitiating the atmosphere in which they live; it seems to me that I feel the corruption reaching my soul through every pore; if I were pardoned for the fault which I have committed, the sight and the society of honest people would fill me with confusion and shame. I am not yet so hardened, that I enjoy the sight of my companions; but I have arrived to this point—that I dread the day, when I shall find myself again in the midst of honorable people: and the reason is, that I am conscious of my weakness."

"Of your weakness!"

"Of my cowardice."

"Of your cowardice! what unjust ideas you entertain of yourself!"

"Is it not cowardly and culpable to trifle with our duties and with honesty? that I have done. And——"

"You—you!"

"Yes, I have done it. When I first entered here, I conceived fully the magnitude of my offence, however excusable it may be. It now appears to me less, by constantly hearing those thieves

and murderers speak of their crimes with cynical jests and ferocious pride. I even surprise myself, occasionally, in envying their audacious indifference. I even rail at myself for torturing my mind with a fault, which is so insignificant, compared with their crimes."

"You are right: your action, far from being censurable, was praiseworthy. You were confident that you could return, the next morning, the sum which you took only for a few hours, for the purpose of saving a whole family from ruin, perhaps from death."

"It makes no difference in the eyes of the law; and in the eyes of honest people, it is a theft. It is doubtless less criminal to steal with such an intention, than with some baser motive; but it is a fatal symptom to be obliged to compare oneself with people of a mean character, in order to justify yourself in your own eyes. I can no longer compare myself with people without stain: I am already reduced to compare myself with the degraded beings with whom I associate; so that I perceive that my conscience becomes harder. Should I commit a theft to-morrow, without the certainty of being able to restore the sum, which I might have stolen with a praiseworthy motive—and even if I stole it through cupidity—I might even then think myself innocent, compared with a man who commits a murder in order to steal; and yet, at this hour, there is as much difference between myself and an irreproachable man, as there is between myself and a murderer. Because there are beings a thousand times more degraded than I am, my degradation will decrease in my estimation. Instead of being able to say, as formerly, 'I am as honest as the most upright man;' I shall console myself by saying, that I am the least degraded among the reprobates with whom I am destined to live for ever."

"For ever! but you will leave this place."

"It matters not. Although I may be acquitted, these people know me; and when I and they leave the prison, they will address me as an old jail companion. If people are ignorant of the precise accusation which leads me to the assize, these wretches will make it public. You see, then, clearly, that cursed and indissoluble ties attach me to them. Whereas, if I had been shut up alone in a cell until the day of my sentence, unknown to them as they would have been unknown to me, I should not have been assailed by those fears which may paralyze the best resolution. Alone, face to face with the memory of my fault, it would have increased rather than have diminished in my estimation. The more serious it appeared to me, the more severe would have been the expiation I should have imposed upon myself for the future. The more reason I should have for soliciting pardon, the greater would have been my efforts to do good in my humble sphere; for a hundred good actions are necessary to expiate a bad one. But can I even think of expiating that which, at this hour, scarcely causes me a solitary pang? Yes! I feel that I am obeying an irresistible influence, against which I have for a long time struggled with all my might. I have been educated for evil purposes, and I begin to yield to my destiny. After all, isolated as I am, without relatives, without friends, what consequence is it whether my destiny ends honestly or criminally? And yet, my motives were good and pure. For the very reason that they wished to make of me an infamous man, I said to myself, 'I have never failed in honor, and to accomplish it has been more difficult for me than for any other person.' To-day, to-day, alas! it is frightful!" exclaimed the prisoner, with sobs so moving that Rigolette could not restrain her tears. The countenance of Germain, moreover, expressed the most distressing sorrow; and sympathy could not be withheld from an upright man, struggling against the attacks of a fatal contagion, whose scrupulous conscience exaggerated the dangers, which were sufficiently threatening without being magnified.

Yes; threatening danger!

We never shall forget those words of a man of singular intelligence, to which an experience of twenty years spent in the government of prisons gave so much authority:

"Admitting that a person unjustly accused, enters a prison perfectly pure, he will always leave it less honest than when he entered it. What might be called the first bud of honor, disappears in that corroding atmosphere."

We must, however, say, that the probity of Germain had long struggled victoriously, and that he rather dreaded the approach than actually suffered from the disease. His fear of seeing his fault diminish in his own eyes, proves that he was keenly alive to its enormity; but the trouble, the fears, the doubts, which cruelly agitated that honorable and generous mind, were, nevertheless, alarming symptoms. Guided by the correctness of her judgment, by her feminine sagacity, and the instincts of her love, Rigolette divined what we have just stated. Although perfectly convinced that her friend had not yet lost anything of his nice sense of honor, she feared that, in spite of the excellence of his character, he might one day become indifferent to what now so cruelly tormented him.

CHAPTER XXIII..... RIGOLETTE.

———However certain we may be of the happiness which we enjoy, we are sometimes tempted to desire *impossible misfortunes*, for the purpose of contemplating with gratitude and veneration, the noble grandeur of certain sacrifices.———

WOLFRANG: *L'esprit Saint*, liv. II.

RIGOLETTE, drying her tears, and addressing Germain, whose forehead was resting against the grating, remarked to him, in a plaintive, serious, and almost solemn voice, that he did not yet know her.

"Listen to me Germain: however poorly I may explain myself—for I cannot speak as well as you—be assured that I will say that which is true and sincere! In the first place, you were wrong in complaining of being solitary and abandoned."

"Oh! do not suppose that I can ever forget the pity that you have shown for me."

"Just now I did not interrupt you, when you spoke of *pity*, but since you repeat the word, I would inform you that it is not pity alone that I feel for you. I will endeavor to explain it to you as well as I can. When we were neighbors, I loved you as a brother; as an agreeable companion. You rendered me little services, which I reciprocated. You permitted me to participate in your amusements on Sundays; and I endeavored by my gayety and gentility, to show my thanks. On that point we were quits."

"Quits! Oh! no! I——"

"Let me have a chance to speak. When you were obliged to leave the house in which we lived, your departure gave me more pain than that of any of my other neighbors."

"Can it be possible?"

"Yes: because the others were thoughtless creatures, to whom I was certainly indebted less than to you. And besides, they were not satisfied in becoming my companions, until I had repeated to them a hundred times, that they could not be otherwise; while you, you imagined at once, what our position toward each other would be. Notwithstanding that, you spent with me all your spare time; you taught me to write; you gave me good advice, somewhat serious, perhaps, but nevertheless, good: in fact, you were the most devoted of all my neighbors, and the only one who asked nothing in remuneration on account of the trouble. That was not all: on leaving the house, you gave me a strong proof of confidence, in intrusting so important a secret to a young girl, like me. Faith! it really made me proud! Then again, after I was separated from you, I thought of you oftener than I did of my neighbors. What I tell you is true! You know that I never lie!"

"Can it be possible, that you made such a distinction between myself and others?"

"Certainly, I did. If I had not done so, I should have had a bad heart. Yes, I said to myself, 'There is no one better than Mr. Germain; only, he is rather serious. But never mind: if I had a friend who wished to get married for the purpose of being comfortable and happy, I should certainly advise her to marry Mr. Germain, for she would have a paradise of a home.'"

"You think of me for another?" said Germain, sadly.

"Most truly! I would have been delighted to have seen you married happily, loving you as I did, as a companion. You see that I am frank, and that I tell you everything."

"And I thank you, from the bottom of my soul! it is a consolation for me to learn, that among all your friends, I was the one you most preferred."

"Well: such was the state of things when your misfortune happened. It was then that I received that kind letter, in which you inform me of that which you call your fault. Fault! I, as unlearned as I am, consider it a beautiful and kind action. It was then, that you requested me to go after those papers, which informed me that you had always loved me, without daring to tell me so. These papers in which I read"—and Rigolette could not restrain her tears—"that thinking of the future; that sickness or want of work, might afflict me; you had left me—in case of your sudden death, which you had reason to fear—you left me the little that you had earned, by the means of your labor and economy."

"Yes; for if during my life, you had fallen sick, or been unable to obtain work, would you not rather have applied to me than to any other! I thought you would. Oh! tell me! tell me! was I not right in thinking so?"

"That 's all very plain: to whom else would you have wished me to apply?"

"Oh! you do not know how pleasing such words are; what consolation they are in my sorrow!"

"I cannot explain to you what I experienced on reading—what a sad word!—that *will*, every line of which contained a remembrance of me, or a thought of my future happiness; and yet I was not to receive these proofs of your affection, until you had ceased to exist. Indeed, what do you wish? After such generous conduct, are you surprised that love should come all at once! Is it not natural that it should be so? Is it not, Mr. Germain?"

The young girl spoke these last words so innocently, and in such an affecting and frank manner, while casting upon Mr. Germain a tender look from her large black eyes, that the latter, at first, could scarcely comprehend her meaning, so far was he from believing that Rigolette loved him. The words, however, were so emphatic, that their echo rang in the very depth of the prisoner's soul. He blushed and turned pale alternately, and then said:

"What do you say? Oh! my God! I fear that, perhaps, I am deceiving myself. I——"

"I say that, from the first moment when I saw you so kind toward me, and when I saw you so unhappy, I loved you otherwise than as a companion; but now, if one of my friends should wish to marry," said Rigolette, between smiles and blushes, "I would, by no means, advise her to marry you, Mr. Germain."

"You love me? love me?"

"It was absolutely necessary that I should tell you so of my own accord, since you would not ask me."

"Can it be possible?"

"It was not my fault that you did not understand, after being put twice upon the track. No, the gentleman would not take a hint, but forced me to make all these confessions to him. It is unfortunate, perhaps; but since I have only you to scold me for my assurance, I do not feel much alarmed. And then," said Rigolette, in a more serious tone, and with affectionate tenderness, "just now you appeared to be so heart-broken and desponding, that I could no longer restrain myself I was conceited enough to believe that this avowal, made with frankness, and from the bottom of my heart, would prevent you from being unhappy hereafter. I said to myself, 'Until now, I have been unsuccessful in my efforts to distract and console him; my dainties have taken away his appetite; my gayety has made him weep; this time at least——' But Heavens! what is the matter with you?" said Rigolette, on seeing Germain conceal his face in his hands. "How cruel you are! whatever I do, whatever I say, you will continue to be unhappy! Is it not both wicked and selfish to act so? One would suppose, that no one but yourself suffered on account of your sorrow."

"Alas! what misery is mine!" cried Germain with despair. "You love me, now that I am no longer worthy of you!"

"No longer worthy of me! There is no good sense in talking so. It is the same as though I had said, that I was unworthy of your friendship, because I had been in prison; for, after all, I have been a prisoner as well as yourself; but am I a less honest girl on that account?"

"But you were thrown in prison because you were a poor unprotected child; while I—oh! my God! what a difference!"

"Well; as to the prison, we shall never have cause to reproach ourselves. It is I, rather, who am the most ambitious; for in my present state, I ought not to think of marrying with any other than a workman. I am a foundling; I possess nothing but my little room and good resolutions; and yet I have boldly offered myself to you as a wife."

"Alas! heretofore, such a lot would have been the dream, the happiness of my life; but now, while resting under this infamous accusation, should I take advantage of your noble generosity, and of that pity for me which has perhaps misguided you? No, no!"

"But, my God! my God!" cried Rigolette, with melancholy impatience, "I tell you that it is not pity that I feel for you, but love. I think of none but you; I neither sleep nor eat; your sad and sweet countenance follows me everywhere. Is that pity? At this moment while you are speaking to me, your look, your voice, reaches my heart. There are a thousand things in you that now please me to distraction, which before I did not remark. I love your face—I love your eyes—I love your form—I love your mind—I love your kind heart. Is that pity still? Why, after having loved you as a friend I now love you as a lover, I do not know. Why I was so foolish and lively when I loved you as a friend, I do not know. Why my feelings are so swallowed up in you since I love you as a lover, I do not know. Why I have waited so long, without finding that you are at once beautiful and good, and that I love you with both my eyes and my heart, I do not know; or rather, if I do know, it is because I have discovered how much you love me, without telling me so, and how generous and devoted you are. Since then, love has exhibited itself in my heart and eyes, as the tear shows itself when we are affected."

"Really, it appears like a dream to hear you talk so!"

"And as for me, I never would have believed that I should have dared to say all this; but your despair has forced me to it. Now, sir, that you know that I love you as my friend, as my lover, as my husband, will you still call it pity?"

The generous scruples of Germain fell for an instant before this bold and innocent confession. An unhoped-for joy delighted him in his melancholy reflections.

"You love me!" he cried; "I believe you. Your accent, your look, confesses all to me. I will not ask myself why I have merited such happiness: I will surrender myself blindly to it. My life—my whole life will never enable me to recompense you. It is true that I have suffered much, but this moment effaces everything."

"At last, then, you are consoled. Oh! I was very sure that I should finally succeed!" cried Rigolette, in a transport of ecstatic joy.

"In the midst of the horrors of a prison, and when everything had conspired to oppress and overwhelm me, that such felicity ——"

Germain could not finish. The thought itself recalled to his mind the reality of his position; his scruples for a moment forgotten, returned with more cruel force, and he continued in a desponding tone:

"But I am a prisoner; I am accused of theft; I shall be perhaps convicted and disgraced; should I accept your valorous sacrifice? should I profit from your generous devotion? Oh! no, no! I am not base enough for that."

"What do you say?"

"That I shall be condemned, perhaps, to a life of years in prison."

"Well," continued Rigolette with calmness and firmness, "it will be seen that I am an honest girl, and they will not refuse to marry us in the chapel of the prison."

"But perhaps I shall be imprisoned at a distance from Paris."

"Once your wife I will follow you: I will establish myself in the city where you are; I will obtain work, and I will come and see you daily."

"But I shall be disgraced in the eyes of all."

"You love me more than all, do you not?"

"How can you ask me?"

"Well; what difference will it then make to you? Far from being disgraced in my eyes, I shall look upon you as a martyr to your kind heart."

"But the world will accuse you; the world will condemn, calumniate your choice."

"The world! You are my world, and I yours. Let them talk."

"But suppose, on leaving the prison, my life should be precarious, wretched, repugnant to all? Suppose I should not find employment? Is it not horrible to think of! Then, if this corruption, this disgrace, which I so much dread, should have its influence over me, what a future for you!"

"You will never become corrupt—no; for now that you know that I love you, such knowledge will ever give you power to resist bad examples; you will think that even then, after leaving prison, when all repulse you, your wife will welcome you with love and gratitude, under the firm conviction that you have remained an honest man. This language astonishes you, does it not? It astonishes myself. I do not know where I have picked up everything that I say to you. It must be, I think, from the very bottom of my soul, and that ought to convince you. If it does not; if you disdain an offer which is made to you with all my heart; and you do not desire the love of a poor girl, who——"

Germain interrupted Rigolette with passionate ardor:

"Well, I accept—I accept. Yes; I feel that there are times when it is cowardly to refuse certain sacrifices. It is doing an unworthy action. I accept, noble, courageous girl!"

"Are you in earnest, really in earnest, this time?"

"On my oath, I am. And besides, you told me something which struck me forcibly—which gave me the courage that I wanted."

"What happiness! and what did I tell you?"

"That on your account I should hereafter remain an honest man. Yes; with such a thought I will have the power of resisting the detestable influences that surround me. I will brave the contagion, and be enabled to preserve worthy of your love, the heart that is yours."

"Ah! Germain! how happy I am. Whatever I may have done for you, I feel now fully recompensed!"

"And further; although you excuse my fault, I shall not forget its importance. My task in the future will be doubled: to expiate the past, and merit the happiness which I owe to you. To effect that, I will do good; and, however poor one may be, the occasion is never wanting."

"Alas! it is true. There are always those to be found more unfortunate than oneself."

"For want of money——"

"We will give tears, such as those I gave for the poor Morels."

"It is holy alms. *The charity of the soul is more precious than that which gives bread.*"

"Then you accept, and will not retract?"

"Oh, never! never! my friend; my wife. Yes, my courage returns. It appears as though I had awakened from a dream. I no longer doubt myself. I deceived myself; happily, I deceived myself. My heart would not beat as it now beats, if it had lost its noble energy."

"Oh! Germain, how beautiful you are, while speaking thus! How much you encourage me; not for myself, but for yourself. Now you will promise me, will you not, now that you have my love as your protection, that you will no longer fear to speak to these wicked men, that their anger may not be excited against you?"

"Be not uneasy. On seeing me sad and depressed, they accused me, without doubt, of being a prey to my remorse; but, on seeing me proud and joyous, they will believe me to be under the influence of their wickedness."

"It is true: they will not suspect you, and I shall feel easy. But, no imprudence, now that you are mine. Remember, I am your little wife."

At this moment, the keeper moved as though awakened.

"Quick! quick!" said Rigolette, in a low tone, and with a smile full of grace and modest affection; "quick, my husband, give me a pretty kiss upon my forehead through the grating; it shall be our betrothment."

And the blushing young girl rested her forehead against the iron grating, while Germain, deeply affected, moistened with his lips her fair white brow. A tear, like a humid pearl, rolled down the prisoner's cheek—what an affecting baptism of this chaste, sad and charming love!

"Oh! already three o'clock!" said the keeper, rising; "and the visitors ought to have left at two. Come, my dear Mademoiselle," added he, addressing the grisette; "it's a pity, but you must leave."

"Oh! thanks! thanks to you, sir, for having allowed us to talk so long, alone. I have given Germain good courage; he will no longer appear so sad, and then he will have no more reason to be afraid of his wicked companions, will he, my friend?"

"Do not be alarmed," said Germain, smiling; "in future I will be the gayest in the prison."

"In which case," said the keeper, "they will cease to notice you."

"Here's a cravat that I have brought Germain, sir," said Rigolette; "must I deposit it in the receiving room?"

"It is usual to do so; but, after all, since I have departed from the regulations, a little thing more or less won't do any harm—come, finish theday; give your present to him quick, with your own hands;" and the keeper opened the door of the grating.

"The good man is right; the day shall be finished," said Germain, receiving the cravat from the hands of Rigolette, which he squeezed tenderly. "Adieu, for a short time. Now I no longer fear to ask you to come and see me, as soon as possible."

"Nor I to promise you. Good-bye, Germain."

"Farewell, my good little friend."

"Don't fail to use my cravat, for fear of the cold; it is so damp here."

"What a beautiful cravat! When I think that you made it for me, I will wear it constantly," said Germain, pressing it to his lips.

"Ah! now I hope that your appetite will return. Shall I cook that nice little dish for you?"

"Certainly; and this time I will do it honor."

"Be easy, then, Mr. Gourmand; you shall tell me how you like it. Good-bye, again. Thanks to you, Mr. Keeper, I leave, today, very happy and very much encouraged. Adieu, Germain."

"Adieu, my little wife, for a short time."

"Adieu, my dear."

A few moments afterward, Rigolette, having put on her overshoes, and taken her umbrella, left the prison with a lighter heart than when she entered it.

During the interview between Germain and the grisette other scenes had transpired in the courtyard of the prison whence we will conduct the reader.

CHAPTER XXIV..... THE LION'S DEN.

If the general appearance of a huge house of detention, constructed, in every particular, as respects comfort and salubrity, that humanity calls for, offers nothing to the view that is peculiar, the sight of the prisoners causes a contrary impression. A feeling of sadness and pity is generally occasioned, on finding ourselves in the midst of an assemblage of female prisoners, and on reflecting that these unfortunate creatures are forced into the perpetration of evil, less by their own will, than by the pernicious influence of the man who first led them astray. And then, again, the most criminal of these women, retain in the depths of their souls, two holy ties, that the violent straining of the most headlong and depraved passions never entirely sever—LOVE AND MATERNITY.

To speak of love and maternity, is to admit, that within these miserable beings, a delicate and soft glimmering can yet lighten here and there the black darkness of deep corruption. But among men, such as prisons make them, and cast them back into the world, there is nothing of the kind. It is crime from a solitary fountain. It is a block of brass which only reddens in the fire of infernal passions. The sight of prisoners who encumber these prisons, also, occasions, at first, a horrible and frightful shuddering. Reflection alone recals thoughts most compassionate, but of great bitterness. Yes, of great bitterness; for we reflect that the peculiar population of these jails and bagnios, that this bloody harvest of the executioner, germinates from the miry soil of ignorance, misery, and beastliness.

If the reader would experience this first impression of horror and fright, of which we speak, let him follow us into the *Lion's Den*. One of the courts of the Force is so called.

There are assembled those prisoners who are considered the more dangerous from their past crimes, or on account of the ferocity or gravity of the accusations that rest against them. Nevertheless, it had been found necessary, on account of the urgent work that was going on in one of the buildings of the Force, to add temporarily to their number many other prisoners. The latter, although equally amenable to the Court of Assizes, were almost men of honesty, compared with the usual tenants of the Lion's Den.

The cloudy and rainy sky, cast a gloomy shade upon the scene we are about to depict. It occurred in the centre of a vast quadrangular yard, surrounded by high white walls, pierced here and there by a few grated windows. At one end of this yard, was a narrow wicketed door; at the other end was the entrance to the sitting-room—a large paved hall—in the centre of which was a furnace surrounded by wooden benches, upon which were lazily extended several prisoners, who were conferring together. Others, preferring exercise to repose, were walking in close file, four or five deep, with arms locked. The sombre and energetic pencil of Salvator or of Goya is required to enable us to sketch faithfully, the various specimens of moral and physical ugliness there exhibited; or to paint, in all its hideous variety, the costumes of these wretches, who were mostly covered by the most miserable garments; for being only *attainted*, or otherwise *supposed innocent*, they were not clad in the uniform dress of the central prisons. Some, however, wore it; for, on entering the prison, their rags were so tattered and infected, that after the usual bath* they had been furnished with the cap and coarse gray pantaloons of the condemned.

A phrenologist would have attentively noted these cadaverous and tawny visages, flattened foreheads, savage or insidious looks, large necks, and mouths indicating either stupidity or wickedness; nearly all exhibited some frightful bestial resemblance. Upon the hardened features of some was displayed the perfidious cunning of the fox, or the sanguinary rapacity of the bird of prey; upon that of others the ferocity of the tiger, or the animal stupidity of the brute. The rotatory marching of this band of silent beings, with their looks of hardened malignancy, their insolent and cynical laughter, crowding and shuffling against each other, in the depth of this courtyard—a species of square pit—presented a strangely ominous appearance. The thought that this ferocious herd, in a given time, would again be let loose upon the world, against which it had declared an implacable war, caused a shudder. What san-

* In conformity with an excellent sanitary arrangement, each prisoner on his arrival, and every fortnight afterward, is conducted to the bathing hall of the prison, and his garments submitted to a purifying fumigation. To a laborer a warm bath is a kind of unheard-of luxury.

guinary vengeance—what murderous projects, were concealed under this show of jeering depravity and effrontery!

Let us sketch a few of the most prominent physiognomies of the Lion's Den, leaving the others for the future.

While the keeper was watching those that were walking, a kind of conventicle was taking place in the sitting-room. Among the prisoners who were engaged in it, Barbillon and Nicholas Martial will be found, of whom, however, we shall speak only from memory.

He who appeared to be, thus to speak, the presiding genius and leader of the discussion, was a prisoner nick-named *Squelette*,* (skeleton,) whose name has often been heard pronounced at the Martials, on the Island of the Ravageur.

Squelette was provost, or captain, of the sitting-room.

The appearance of this man—who was above the ordinary stature, and about forty years of age—justified his lugubrious nickname, by an emaciation, of which it is impossible to convey an idea; and which may be called osteological. In the physiognomies of Squelette's companions were analogous in a greater or less degree, to those of the tiger, the vulture, or the fox; the form of his rapidly retreating forehead, his bony, compressed and elongated jaws, supported by an immensely long neck, vividly recalled to mind the conformation of a serpent's head. A total baldness heightened this resemblance in a still greater degree; for, under the coarse skin of his forehead, almost as horizontal as that of a reptile, could be distinguished the small protuberances and seams of his scalp. As to his visage, imagine a piece of old parchment, pasted upon the bones of his face, and extending from the projection of his cheek-bones, down to the angle of his lower jaw, the ligaments of which could be distinctly seen. His small squinting eyes were so deeply sunken, while his eyebrows and cheek-bones were so prominent, that underneath his sallow forehead, where the light played, were exhibited two orbits, literally filled with darkness, and which, at a short distance, seemed to disappear in the depth of these two gloomy cavities, two black holes, which gave to Squelette a most dismal aspect. His long projecting teeth, jutting out from beneath the tawny skin of his flat and bony jaws, gave, almost incessantly, to his mouth, a habitual sneer.

Although the hardened muscles of this man had almost assumed the character of tendons, he possessed extraordinary strength. The most robust resisted, with difficulty, the grasp of his lengthy arms and long, lank fingers. It might have been called the formidable grasp of an iron skeleton.

He wore a blue frock that was much too short, which exposed to the gratification of his vanity his knotty hands, and the half of his arms, or rather, two bones—the *radius* and *cubitus*, if our anatomy will be pardoned—two bones, covered with a coarse and dark skin, divided by a deep groove, through which ran, in a serpent-like manner, a few hard and dry veins, like cords. When he placed his hands upon a table, it appeared—to use an appropriate metaphor of Pique Vinaigre—as though he was displaying a *set of playing-bones*.†

Squelette, after having passed fifteen years of his life at the bagnio for theft, and an attempt to commit murder, had violated his ban, and had been caught in the act of committing theft and murder. The last assassination had been perpetrated under circumstances of such atrocity, that this bandit, on account of its being his second offence, already considered himself as condemned to death. The influence that Squelette exercised over the other prisoners, on account of his strength, vigor, and depravity, had caused the director of the prison to choose him as the provost of the dormitory; in other words, Squelette was the police officer of the sleeping apartment, in everything that related to the order, arrangement and cleanliness of the hall and beds. He acquitted himself so faithfully, that none of the prisoners had ever dared to disobey any of the regulations while he was superintendent.

How strange and significant! The most intelligent of the prison directors, after having in vain attempted to invest the functions to which we allude, upon those prisoners who recommended themselves, in some degree, by their honesty, or whose crimes were less grave; were finally compelled to renounce such a choice—however logical and moral it may have been—and select their provosts from among those who were the most corrupt and the most dreaded; such prisoners *alone* possessing a positive influence over their companions.

Again we we will state, that the more daring and wicked was the criminal, the more was he to be relied upon, and—so to speak—*respected*. Is not this fact established by experience, and sanctioned by this *compulsory choice*, an undeniable argument against the vice of promiscuous imprisonment? Does it not show, by positive evidence, the intensity of the contagion that mortally attaints those prisoners, in whom we have reason to hope there exists some chance of reformation? Yes: for what benefit is derived from thinking of repentance or amendment, when in this pandemonium where he is to pass many long years, his life perhaps, he sees that influence increases in a ratio with crime?

Again, do we not know that the external world, that honest society, no longer exists for the prisoner? Indifferent to the moral laws which regulate it, he necessarily assumes the habits of those who surround him; all the distinctions of the jail being reserved for the superiority of crime, he inevitably ever aims to reach this savage aristocracy.

Let us return to Squelette, the provost of the lodging-room, who was conversing with several prisoners, among whom were Barbillon and Nicholas Martial.

"Are you certain of what you say!" asked Squelette of Martial.

"Yes, yes; a hundred times, yes. Father Micou got it from big cripple, who wished to kill the rascal because he denounced some one."

"Then let some one bite his nose off, and let that be the end of it," added Barbillon; "Squelette, a moment ago, wanted to give this sneaking Germain a stab."

The provost took his pipe from his mouth for a moment, and said, in a voice so low and gruff, that he could scarcely be heard:

"Germain was skulking; he was troublesome, and kept watching us; the more one speaks, the more he listens; we must hustle him out of the Lion's Den; when we have once made him bleed, they will take him away from here."

"Well," said Nicholas, "what 's the matter now?"

"The matter is," continued Squelette, "that if he has informed, as big cripple says, bleeding is not enough for him!"

"That 's all right," said Barbillon.

"Must make an example of him," said Squelette with increased animation; "it is no longer the police who discover us; it is these informers. Jacques and Ganthier, whom they guillotined the other day, were informed upon; Rousillon, who was sent to the galleys for life, was also denounced!"

"And I? and my mother? and Calabasse? and my brother of Toulon?" cried Nicholas; "were we not informed against by Bras-rouge? Certainly we were. But instead of putting him here, they sent him to Rougnette; they did n't dare to leave him with us; he smelt a rat, the villain!"

"And I?" said Barbillon; "did n't Bras-rouge also inform against me?"

"And against me, also?" said a young prisoner, in a sharp, squeaking, and affected voice. "I was betrayed by Jobert, a man who proposed to me a job in rue Saint Martin."

This last speaker, with a squeaking voice, pale face, effeminate manner, and an insidious and cowardly expression of countenance, was clad very singularly. Upon his head was a red handkerchief, from underneath which appeared two locks of brown hair, which were parted upon his temples; the two ends of this turban were tied into a bow-knot, which was puffed out immediately over his forehead. He wore as a cravat, a white merino shawl, figured with green palm-leaves, which was crossed upon his breast. His vest, of maroon-colored cloth, disappeared beneath the girdle of his full plaid pantaloons, which were of Scotch material, of variegated colors.

"Isn't that mean?—the fellow must be a great scoundrel," said the latter personage, in a squeaking voice. "Nothing in the world could have induced me to suspect Jobert."

"I knew very well that he denounced you," replied the skeleton, who seemed to show great partiality to this prisoner; "and the proof is, that they have treated this informer in the same way that they have treated Bras-rouge; they did n't dare to send Jobert here; they boxed him up at the Conciergerie. We must put an end to it—an example is necessary—false brothers, now-a-days, perform all the business of the police; they believe themselves safe in their schemes, because they are put in a different prison from those whom they have denounced."

"That is true."

* In this particular we experience some scruples. This very year, a poor devil, named Decure, who was only guilty of being a vagabond, had been condemned to imprisonment for a month. He had exhibited himself at a fair, as a *walking skeleton*, on account of his frightful and incredible emaciation. So curious did he appear to us, that we have taken the liberty to use him as our model, although, *morally*, he bears no resemblance to our fictitious skeleton. We give a portion of his examination.

THE PRESIDENT. "What were you doing at the time of your arrest?"

DECURE. "According to the profession that I practice, as a *walking skeleton*, I was going through all kinds of exercises, for the purpose of amusing young people. I reduce my body to the condition of a skeleton; I extend my bones and muscles at will; I eat arsenic, corrosive-sublimate, toads, spiders, and, in fact, all kinds of insects; I eat fire also; I swallow boiling oil—I wash myself in it. I am called to Paris, at least once a year, by some of the most respectable physicians—such as M. M. Dubois, and Orfila—who make me perform all sorts of experiments with my body, &c."

† Small bones, used by children in a game called cockle.

"To prevent this, prisoners must look upon every informer as a mortal enemy, whether he has denounced Peter or Jim, here or elsewhere, it makes no difference—fall upon him! When we have *cooled* four or five of them in the yards, the others will wag their tongues twice before they betray."

"You are right, Squelette," said Nicholas; "Germain must be the first to swallow the dose."

"He will swallow it!" cried the provost; "but let us wait until the big cripple arrives. When he has proved to every one that Germain is an informer, the business will be settled; the sheep will no longer bleat; we will choke him."

"And how shall we manage the keepers, who are eternally on the look-out?" asked the prisoner, whom Squelette called Javotte.

"I have an idea that Pique Vinaigre will be of service."

"He! he is a coward."

"And no stronger than a flea."

"I know what I am about. Where is he?"

"He has just returned from the parlor; but they have sent for him again to go and talk with his prison-rat."*

"And Germain: is he always in the parlor?"

"Yes, with that little girl who comes to visit him."

"As soon as he returns, be on the look-out; but it will be necessary to wait for Pique Vinaigre, we cannot do anything without him."

"Without Pique Vinaigre?"

"No."

"Shall we *cool* Germain?"

"I will take charge of it."

"But with what weapons? they have taken away our knives."

"And would you put your necks into these pinchers?" asked the skeleton, displaying his long and bony fingers, hard as iron.

"Will you choke him?"

"Slightly!"

"But if they discover that you are the man?"

"After the deed? Do you think I have two heads like the calf, which they show at the fair?"

"True: one is shortened but once; and since you are, to be sure, so——"

"Damned sure—the prison-rat repeated it again yesterday. I was caught with my hand in the bag, and my knife at the throat. I have also been convicted once before: my account is settled. I shall send my head to *charlott* to see if he cheats us by putting saw-dust in his basket instead of bran, which is allowed us by the government."

"It is true: the man who is guillotined, has a right to bran. My father was cheated in the same way," said Nicholas Martial, with a ferocious grin. "I intend to appeal from it."

This abominable joke was received with a burst of laughter. The conversation is frightful; but so far from exaggerating, we soften the horror of sentiments, which are so frequently uttered in prisons; and yet it is necessary that the public should form some idea—if it is a weak one—of what is said in those horrible schools of licentiousness, theft, murder, and perdition. It must be known, with what audacious contempt all great criminals speak of the most awful punishment which society can inflict. The propriety of substituting for these powerless penalties, these contagious seclusions, the only punishment which can terrify the most ferocious villain, we shall presently demonstrate.

The prisoners of the sitting-room had burst into a laugh. "A thousand thunders!" said Squelette; "I wish that the bench of the *curious*‡ could hear us talk. They think to make us sneak before their guillotine. Let them come to barrière Saint Jacques on the day of the performance for my benefit: they will hear my scornful speech to the crowd, and hear me tell charlot, with a haughty tone, 'Father Sampson, *the string, if you please.*'"§

New bursts of laughter welcomed this jest.

"The affair lasts about long enough to swallow a quid. Charlot pulls the string——"

"And the baker's door is opened for you," said Squelette, without removing his pipe.

"You don't say so! Do you believe that there *is* a baker!"

"You fool! I merely said it for the joke. There is a knife, a head beneath it, and—that's all."

"That's none of our business."

"As for me, now that I know which way my course lies, and that I have to halt at the abbey of Mount-with-regret,‖ I should just as lief start to-day as to-morrow," said Squelette, with savage exultation. "I wish I was there now; the blood comes to my mouth, when I think of the crowd that will be there to see me! There will be four or five thousand people fighting with each other for a good place; windows and chairs will be hired, as when a great procession is passing. Methinks I hear them already singing out, 'A chair to let,' 'A place to let.' Besides, the troops will be out, cavalry and infantry—the devil and all his imps. And all this display for me—for Squelette! They wouldn't make so much fuss about an honest man, would they! There is enough in it to give a man spunk and courage, if he was as cowardly as Pique Vinaigre. It is enough to make a fellow walk like a hero: and all those eyes which are staring at you will put fire into your breast. 'Tis a moment that all have got to go through, and one dies like a brave fellow. It vexes the judges and honest people, to mock old death."

"That's true," said Barbillon, attempting to imitate the braggadocio bravado of Squelette; "they think they have done wonders, when they send charlot to set up his shop for our benefit."

"Pshaw!" said Nicholas, in his turn; "who cares for charlot's shop, or the prison, or the bagnio? who cares a curse about them all, provided we all go together? Hurrah, for death!"

"The greatest bore would be, to shut us up in a cell day and night," said the effeminate youth, with a squeaking voice; "and they say that we have got to come to it."

"In a cell!" exclaimed Squelette with a wrathy shudder. "In a cell—all alone! Don't mention it! Hold your tongue! I'd rather they should cut my arms and legs off. What! all alone between four walls! without having any old friends of the trade to laugh with? That cannot be. I prefer a hundred times the bagnio to the central prison, because in the bagnio, instead of being shut up, one is out doors and sees some people. One goes and comes, and flourishes about with a chain. Well, I'd rather a hundred times be shortened, than shut up in a cell for a single year. Yes, I tell you that at this very hour, when I know, when I am sure, that I shall be mowed down, if they were to ask, 'Would you prefer a year in a cell?' I should say, no; and stretch forth my neck. One year, all alone! is that possible? What do they wish us to think about when we are all alone?"

"Suppose they should force you into a cell?"

"I would n't stay in it. I would do so much with my feet and my hands, that I should escape," said Squelette.

"But if you were sure that you could n't escape?"

"Then I would kill the first man that came near me, in order to be guillotined."

"But suppose, instead of condemning a murderer to death, they should condemn him to be shut up in a cell for life?"

Squelette appeared struck with this observation, and after a moment's silence, he continued: "I don't know what I should do; I'd break my head against the walls; I'd starve myself to death, rather than stay in a cell; what! all my life, alone! with myself! without any hope of escaping! I tell you, it is n't possible to stand it. Look you; there is no braver fellow than I am. I would bleed a man for sixpence, and even for the honor of it. They think I have killed but two persons, but if the dead could speak, there are five cold fellows that could tell how I work."

The brigand was undoubtedly boasting. These ferocious braggadocios are the most characteristic feature of hardened criminals. A director of prisons has informed us, that if the murders of which these reprobates boast were actually true, the population would be decimated.

"Just so with me," said Barbillon, boasting in his turn. "They think that I have only killed the husband of the milk-woman of the Cite; but I have served many other people with the help of tall Robert, who was mowed down last year."

"I tell you, I neither fear fire nor the devil. Well; if I was in a cell, and sure that I never could escape—thunder! I think I should be frightened."

"At what?"

"At being left alone," replied the provost.

"Thus: if you were to begin again your tricks of a thief or murderer, and instead of central prisons, bagnios and guillotines, there were only cells, you would sneak, would n't you?"

"Yes; upon my word, I think I should," replied Squelette.

And he spoke the truth. It is impossible to conceive of the unspeakable terror, which the thought of solitary confinement inspires in the bandit's mind. Is not this terror an eloquent argument in favor of that penalty? This is not all; the condemnation to solitary confinement, so much dreaded by the criminal, will eventually lead to the abolition of capital punishment, for the following reasons: the crime-stained generation which at present fill our prisons, regard the solitary system as an intolerable torture; habituated to the perverse cheerfulness

* Lawyer. † Executioner. ‡ Judges.

§ To understand the import of the horrible jest, it must be known that the knife slides between the grooves of the guillotine, after having been set in motion by the drawing of a spring, by means of a string attached to it.

‖ The guillotine.

of general imprisonment—of which we have endeavored to sketch a few weak features; for we must give up the attempt to convey an idea of the monstrous and unnatural wickedness, of all kinds, which prevails—the present generation of criminals, we say, finding themselves threatened, in case of the repetition of a crime, with solitary imprisonment, and thus separated from the infamous society where they so gayly expiated their crimes, and thus being left alone with the memory of the past, their minds will revolt before such a frightful punishment. Many of them will prefer death; and, in order to incur capital punishment, will not shrink from murder; for, strange as it may appear, out of ten criminals who would wish to end their life, nine would murder, in order to be executed, and one alone would commit suicide. The last vestige of a barbarous state of society will then disappear from our penal codes. In order to remove from the murderer that last refuge, which they expect to find in annihilation, our legislators will be forced to abolish capital punishment.

But will solitary confinement for life, be a sufficiently formidable punishment for certain heinous crimes, such as parricide, for example? Convicts escape from the securest and the best governed prison, or, at least, they hope to escape: the criminals of whom we speak, should have no such possibility, no such hope before them.

Capital punishment, which has no other object than to deliver society from a dangerous being; capital punishment, which seldom gives to the culprit time for repentance, and never, the chance of purifying himself, by expiating his offences; a penalty, which many criminals suffer almost senseless and inanimate, and which others brave with a frightful sneer, will be, perhaps, replaced by a terrible infliction; but which gives to the culprit an opportunity for repentance and expiation, and which will not suddenly cut off, in the midst of his crimes, a creature of God.

Blindness will remove all chance of escape, and all danger to human life, from the convicted murderer. Capital punishment will, therefore, in this, its only efficacious feature, find an equally effectual substitute. Society does not kill, on the ground of the *lex talionis*; it does not kill to inflict suffering; for it has selected the kind of death which is regarded the least distressing.* It kills for its own security. What has society to fear from a blind man in prison? In fine, this perpetual confinement, attended with the conversation of the refined and holy, who might devote themselves to such a benevolent mission, would permit the murderer to redeem his crime, by long years of remorse and contrition.

A great tumult and noisy exclamation of joy, uttered by the prisoners, who were promenading in the yard, interrupted the council at which Squelette presided. Nicholas arose hastily, and advanced to the threshold of the sitting-room door, in order to ascertain the cause of the unusual disturbance.

"It is the big cripple who has arrived," exclaimed Nicholas, returning.

"The big cripple!" exclaimed the provost. "And has Germain returned from the parlor?"

"Not yet," said Barbillon.

"Let him hurry then," said Squelette, "so that I may give him an order for a new coffin."

CHAPTER XXV..... THE PLOT.

THE big cripple, whose arrival had been welcomed by the prisoners of the Lion's Den with such exultation, and whose denunciation might prove so fatal to Germain, was a man of medium size, and in spite of his corpulence and infirmity, seemed active and vigorous. His beastly countenance, like that of many of the bandits, bore some resemblance to the bull dog. His low forehead, his small gray eye, his flabby cheeks, his heavy jaws, the lower one of which was very prominent, and furnished with long teeth, or rather broken tusks, protruding from his lips, rendered his similarity to the brute creation still more striking. He wore upon his head a cap of otter's fur, and a blue cloak with a fur collar hung from his shoulders.

The big cripple entered the prison in the company of a man of about thirty years of age, whose dark and sun-burnt visage appeared less degraded than that of the other prisoners, although he affected the dauntless and bravado air of his companion. He frowned occasionally with a bitter smile. The big cripple found himself among old friends and acquaintances. He hardly had opportunity to reply to the words which welcomed him from every side.

"Here you are, at last, big joker. The more the merrier. We shall have fun now."

"We have wanted you very much."

"You have been a long time getting here."

"I have done everything in my power to get among my old friends again. It's no fault of mine, if the police didn't pick me up sooner."

"Just so, my old fellow. We don't go and place our own feet in the chains; but when we are once in it, we must drag it along."

"You are in good luck: Pique Vinaigre is here."

"He also is an old friend of Melun; first rate. His stories will help us kill time, and he won't want customers, for I announce to you some recruits."

"Who are they?"

"Just as I was about to be boxed up at the office, they brought in two chaps. One of them I know nothing about, but the other, who wears a blue cotton cap and a gray blouse, caught my eye. It is a head that I have seen before somewhere. It seems to me that I have met him at the ogress's of the White Rabbit; a well-built fellow."

"Look here, big cripple, do you remember that I made a bet with you at Melun, that you would be pinched again within a year?"

"That's true, and you've won the bet; for I have had mor chances of being caught than of being crowned with honors."

"But what have you done?"

"I have been stealing in the American fashion."

"I understand; always up to your old tricks."

"Always; I pursue my humble path; that trick is a common one, but simpletons are common also, and if it had n't been for a jackass trick of my colleague, I should n't have been here; but never mind, the lesson will be of service when I begin anew. I will take my precautions; I have my plans all arranged. Hullo! here is Cardillac!" said the cripple, seeing a small man approaching, shabbily dressed, with a malignant, mean and cunning look, who united the features of the fox and the wolf; "good day, old fellow."

"Hullo! you limping genius!" said the prisoner, surnamed Cardillac, to the cripple; "some of us have been saying every day, 'he will come;' others, 'he will not come;' the gentleman is like a pretty woman, he must be coveted."

"To be sure, to be sure he must."

"Look here!" said Cardillac, "have you been sent here for something smart, something in the Corsican fashion?"

"Upon my word, my dear fellow, I've gone a peg higher than burglary; before that I had performed some nice jobs, but the last flashed in the pan; a superb affair, which, by the way, will come off yet; unfortunately, myself and Frank, whom you see, just missed it," and the big cripple pointed to his companion, upon whom all eyes were fixed.

"Hullo! sure enough, here is Frank," said Cardillac; "I should n't have known him on account of his beard. Is it really you? I thought at least that you were mayor of your village by this time; you wanted to play the honest, did n't you?"

"I was a fool, and I smart for it," said Frank, in a surly tone; "but there is a pardon for every sin. I can afford it once; now I belong to the family of thieves until I burst: look out when I begin."

"That's fine; that's what I call good language."

"But what the devil has happened to you, Frank?"

"That which happens to every liberated convict who is foo enough to play the honest man, fate is so just. When I left Melun, I had nine hundred francs and odd."

"That is true," said the big cripple; "all his troubles have sprung from keeping his money instead of eating it up when he left his prison; you will see whither repentance leads, and whether anything is to be made out of it."

"They sent me to Etamps, under surveillance," continued Frank; as I am a locksmith, I went to a man of my trade, and said to him, 'I am a liberated convict, and I know that people do n't like to employ them, but here are the nine hundred francs which I have saved; give me some work, my money will be my backer, I want to work and gain an honest living.'"

"Upon my word, there is no man like Frank for such ideas."

"He always was a little cracked, as if his head had been struck with a hammer."

"Of course he is a locksmith."

"You are a witty dog!"

"You will see now what came from his honesty."

"I proposed then, my saving as a security to the master locksmith to give me employment. 'I am not a broker, to take mo-

* My father, Dr. Joseph Sue, believed the contrary. A series of interesting and profound observations, published by him on this subject, tend to prove that thought survives, for a few moments after decapitation, or dislocation of the neck. This probability alone makes one shudder with terror.

ney on interest,' said he to me, 'and I do n't want a liberated convict in my shop; I am employed in houses to open the door when the key is lost; my trade necessarily requires confidence, and if it was known that I employed a liberated convict among my workmen, I should lose my customers; so, good evening, neighbor.'"

"Don't you think, Cardillac, that he was served right?"

"Certainly, he was."

"What a child you were," said the big cripple, addressing Frank in a paternal manner; "instead of breaking your ban at once, and coming to Paris to eat up your savings, in order to be penniless, and have a good excuse for stealing, when superb ideas always pop into our heads——"

"What's the use of repeating the same thing over and over?" said Frank, with impatience. "It is true, I was wrong not to spend my earnings, since I have had no enjoyment from them. To return to my surveillances: as there were but four locksmiths in Etamps, the one to whom I applied first blabbed to all the others, and they told me, like their friend, 'I thank you;' so that I met the same treatment on every side."

"You see, my friends, the use of being honest. We are marked for life, I tell you!"

"Thrown into the streets of Etamps, I lived upon my earnings one month—two months. The moments flew away, but the money did n't come. I broke my ban, and left Etamps."

"That's what you should have done at first, jackanapes."

"I came to Paris and found some work, as my boss did n't know who I was; for I told him I had just come from the provinces, and that he had n't a better workman in his shop. I placed the seven hundred francs which remained with a broker, who gave me a note; and when it was due he would n't pay me, and I put my note into an officer's hands. He sues—recovers the money, which I left in his hands, saying to myself, 'T will serve for a rainy day.' About that time, I came across the big cripple."

"Yes, my friends; and I was the rainy day, as you will see presently. Frank was a locksmith, and manufactured keys. I had a job in hand, in which he might be useful, and I proposed it to him. I had some impressions, and there was nothing to do but to make keys for them, and that was in his line. The child refused: he wished to become honest. I said to myself, 'I will do him a service, in spite of himself.' I wrote an anonymous letter to his boss, another to his fellow-workmen, telling them that Frank was a liberated convict. The boss kicked him into the street, and the fellow-workmen turned up their noses. He applied to another master, and worked there a week, when I played him the same game. If he had applied to ten, I should have served him in the same manner."

"I did not suspect, then, that it was you who informed against me," said Frank. "Had I known it, you would have passed a very unpleasant quarter of an hour."

"I suppose so; but I am no fool. I told you, that I was going to Longjumeau to see my uncle; but I remained in Paris, and learnt all that you were about, by means of little Ledru."

"Well, I was turned away from my last employer, as a fellow only fit to be hung. Work, then; be honest; so that people may ask you, not 'what are you doing?' but 'what have you done?' Once, in the street, I said to myself, 'I have my savings while I am waiting for work.' I went to see the officer; he had raised his foot, and my money had run away. I was penniless; I had n't even enough to pay for a week's lodgings. How mad I was! About that time, the big cripple, looking as if he had just arrived from Longjumeau, took advantage of my wrath. I did n't know what the devil to do, having seen that there was no use in being honest, that, once in the thieving line, a fellow was in for life. The big cripple kept constantly treading on my heels——"

"That brave Frank no longer sneaks," said the cripple; "he makes up his mind like a hero, dives into the job—opens rich; but, unluckily, as we opened our mouths to swallow the morsel, we were seized by the gendarmes. What could we do, my boys? It is one of the misfortunes of a trade that would be too respectable without it."

"After all, if that rascally bailiff hadn't stolen my money, I should n't have been here," said Frank, with concentrated rage.

"Well, well," said the cripple, "just at present you are very rich; you think, I suppose, you were much better off, when you were killing yourself with work?"

"I was free."

"Yes, on Sunday, and when work did n't press; but the remainder of the week you were chained up like a dog; and you were not always sure of work. I tell you, that you don't know what is for your own interest."

"You will teach it to me," said Frank, bitterly.

"After all, you have good reasons to be vexed. It is a pity that our job failed, 'twas such a superb one, and it will keep for two months; the fellows will feel more safe, and the experiment can be repeated. It is a rich house—rich. I shall be sentenced for breaking my ban, so that I shall be unable to resume the job; but if I can find an amateur, I will part with it for a consideration. My woman has the impressions, and all that is to be done, is to manufacture false keys; and, with the information that I can give, it will go smooth as grease. There was, and is still, ten thousand francs which may be cribbed; that should be consolation for you, Frank."

The accomplice of the big cripple shook his head, crossed his arms upon his breast, and made no answer.

Cardillac took the big cripple by the arm, drew him into the corner of the yard, and said to him, after a moment's silence:

"Is the job in which you failed a good one still?"

"In two months, it will be as good as new."

"Can you prove it?"

"To be sure, I can."

"What will you sell it for?"

"A hundred francs in advance; and I will send word to my woman to give up the impressions, by which some false keys may be made. Besides, if the affair succeeds, I shall expect that one-fifth of the profits shall be paid to my woman."

"It is reasonable!"

"As I shall know to whom the impressions are given, if I am shaved in the bargain, I will denounce you!"

"You would be right, if you were shaved; honesty among thieves, I say! We must trust to each other, or there could be no business transactions between us!"

Another anomaly, which prevails among these outlaws—the wretch told the truth. It is seldom that thieves break their promises in bargains of that nature; these criminal affairs are governed by a sort of probity, or in order to avoid prostituting their word, we should rather say that a necessity compels these bandits to keep their promise; for if they should violate it, "there could be no business transactions between them," as the companion of the cripple expressed it. Thefts and robberies are frequently exchanged and bartered in prison, which is another frightful feature of promiscuous imprisonment.

"If what you tell me is true," said Cardillac, "I can make arrangements with you for the job; there are no proofs against me, and I am sure of being acquitted. I shall be tried within a fortnight. I shall be set at liberty within twenty days. The time employed in looking about and picking up information, making false-keys, &c., will occupy a month, say six weeks."

"That will be just about the space that the fellows need to recover from their alarm, and besides, a chap that has been robbed once, is not apt to fear it again; you know that."

"Yes, I know it; I will take the job; it is a bargain."

"But, will you have the where-with-all to pay me? I wish the money advanced."

"Here, take my last button. When all is gone, there is still some left," said Cardillac, pulling one of the cloth-covered buttons from his ragged old coat, and tearing away the wrapper with his nails, showed instead of a button mould, a forty franc piece."

"You see," he added, "that I can pay you something in advance, when we have talked about the affair."

"Agreed then, my old man," said the big cripple, "since you are to go out soon, and have a capital to start upon, I can help you in the way of increasing it. It is very young yet, a sort of embryo, a real baby theft, which my woman and myself have been nursing for two months, and which can now walk alone. Just imagine a lonely house in a deserted quarter, a first floor looking upon one side into a depopulated street, and upon the other side into a garden, two old folks, who go to roost with the chickens. Since the riots and through fear of being robbed, they have concealed in a corner, a large preserve pot, filled with gold. My woman discovered the whole affair by making the servant gab; but I must tell you that this job will be dearer than the other; it is already cooked and ready to be served up."

"We will arrange it ourselves; give yourself no trouble. I see you have not worked badly since you left the central prison."

"I have had good enough luck. I hooked right and left about fifteen hundred francs; one of my best morsels was the frog of two women, who lodged in the same garret with myself, in the passage de la Brasserie."

"At the house of father Micou, the receiver?"

"Right!"

"And how is your woman Josephine?"

"She is always a real ferret; she will show good management in the house of those old people I spoke about. She is the woman to smell out a pot of yellow-boys!"

"She is a high-mettled piece."

"I am proud of her! But speaking of high-mettled women, do you know Chouette well?"

"Yes. Nicholas told me that the Schoolmaster had finished her, and become crazy himself."

"It is, perhaps, on account of the loss of his sight by an accident, which I know nothing about. Well, my old Caramac, it is agreed, since you will bargain with me for my *babies*, I will speak to no one about them."

"To nobody! I will take them from the nurse's hand, and we will talk about them to-night."

"How do you spend your time, here?"

"We laugh and play the fool."

"Who is the provost of the company?"

"Squelette."

"He is a hard boy. I met him at the Martials, at the Island of the Ravageur: we had fine times together, with Josephine and Boulotte."

"By the way, Nicholas is here."

"I know it; father Micou told me. He complained that Nicholas made him sing. I'll draw a small tune from the old villain's throat; receivers are made for that purpose."

"We were speaking of Squelette, and here he is!" said Cardillac, pointing to the provost, who appeared at the door of the sitting-room.

"Answer to the roll," said Squelette to the big cripple.

"Here!" said the latter, entering the hall in company with Frank, who took his arm.

While Cardillac, the big cripple, and Frank, had been conversing together, Barbillon had been, by order of the provost, to rally twelve of the most daring prisoners, who, in order not to awaken the suspicion of the guard, had entered one by one into the sitting-room.

The rest of the prisoners remained in the yard; and some of them, instigated by Barbillon, spoke in loud and angry voices, in order to attract the attention of the guard, and distract his vigilance from the sitting-room, where Nicholas, Squelette, Barbillon, Frank, Cardillac, and the big cripple, with about fifteen other prisoners, were waiting with impatient curiosity for Squelette to open his lips. Barbillon, who was charged to watch, and give a signal when the guard approached, placed himself near the door. Squelette, removing the pipe from his mouth, said to the big cripple:

"Do you know a fellow called Germain, with brown hair, blue eyes, and the look of a sneak?"

"Is Germain here?" exclaimed the big cripple, whose features expressed at the same time, surprise, hatred, and anger.

"You know him, then?" asked Squelette.

"Don't I know him? he is an informer. I denounce him to you, my friends; he must be thrashed."

"Yes! yes!" exclaimed the prisoners.

"Are you very sure that he has informed?" asked Frank. "It would be too bad to thrash a man who do n't deserve it."

This observation displeased Squelette, who leaned toward the big cripple, and whispered to him: "Who is this chap?"

"A man with whom I have worked."

"Are you sure of it?"

"Oh, yes; but he is a white-livered chap. I'll keep my eye on him."

"Let us hear how Germain turned informer."

"Explain yourself, big cripple," exclaimed Squelette, fixing his eye on Frank.

"It happened in this manner," said the big cripple. "A fellow from Nantz, named Velu, an old liberated convict, brought up this young fellow, whose parents are unknown. When he was old enough, he placed him in the house of a banker, thinking that he had let a wolf into his vault, and intending to make use of Germain for a superb job, which he had been for a long time nursing. He had two strings to his bow; a forgery, or the rifling of the banker's vault. A hundred thousand francs in two blows. Everything was ready, and Velu relied upon the young man as upon himself. The youngster slept in the pavilion, where the vault was. Velu disclosed to him his plan. Germain gave no answer, but denounced everything to his patron, and started the same night for Paris."

The prisoners uttered murmurs of indignation, and violent threats.

"He is an informer; we must break his bones."

"If you wish, I'll pick a quarrel with him, and smash him."

"We must mark upon his face, a ticket of admission to the hospital."

"Order in the meeting," cried Squelette, in an imperious tone.

The prisoners were silent. "Go ahead," said the provost, continuing to speak to the big cripple.

"Relying upon the aid of Germain, Velu and two of his friends attempted the affair that very night. The bankers were on the look-out, and one of Velu's friends was caught, while climbing through a window, but Velu himself had the good luck to escape, and came to Paris, furious with rage at having been denounced by Germain, and at having missed a superb chance. One day he met the youngster, but as it was broad daylight, he dared not attack him, but he followed him, and discovered where he lived; and one night Velu, little Ledru, and myself, fell upon Germain. Unluckily for us, he escaped, and cleared out from rue du Temple, where he dwelt: and since then, we have n't been able to catch sight of him; but if he is here, I demand——"

"You have nothing to demand," said Squelette, authoritatively.

The big cripple was silent. "I will take the bargain. Yield to me the skin of Germain, and I 'll flay him alive. I am not called Squelette for nothing. I am already dead. My hole is dug at Clamart. I risk nothing in working for the fraternity. The informers injure us more than the police. They are forced to send the scamps to the Roquette, and the informers of the Roquette to the Conciergerie. They think them safe; but hold on. When each prison shall have killed the informer who is in it, never mind whom or where he has denounced, it will destroy the appetite of the remainder. I will set the example, and let the others follow it."

All the prisoners, applauding the resolution of Squelette, drew close to him. Barbillon himself, instead of remaining near the door, joined the group, and did not perceive that a new prisoner was entering the sitting-room. The new arrival, who wore a gray blouse, with a blue cotton cap, embroidered with red worsted, pulled over his eyes, started at hearing the name of Germain, and hastened to mingle among the admirers of Squelette, and approved with voice and gesture, the criminal determination of the provost.

"Is n't that Squelette a smart fellow?"

"The devil himself could n't make him back out."

"He is a famous chap."

"If every thief had as much courage, we would be the judges, and send the sneaks to the guillotine."

"That would be right; every one in his turn."

"Yes; but there is no concert between us."

"Squelette will render a great service to the fraternity. When denouncers find that they are cooled down, there will be no more denouncing."

"That 's a fact!"

"And since Squelette is sure of being mowed down, it will cost him nothing to slay a denouncer."

"As for me, I think that it is too bad to kill this young man," said Frank.

"What! what!" exclaimed Squelette, in an angry tone, "have we not a right to kill a traitor?"

"In fact, he is a traitor! so much the worse for him," said Frank, after a moment's reflection.

These last words, and the voucher of the big cripple, dispelled from the minds of the prisoners, all doubt of Frank's fidelity. Squelette, alone continued to mistrust him.

"What shall we do with the keepers, Dead-beforehand? for that is as much your name as Squelette," said Nicholas, grinning.

"We will keep the guard busy in some other part of the yard."

"No, we will hold him by force."

"Yes."

"No."

"Silence in the meeting!" exclaimed Squelette. The most profound silence followed. "Listen to me attentively," continued the provost, in his hoarse voice: "We shan't be able to cool the rascal, while the keeper is in the sitting-room or the yard. I have no knife; there will be some smothered groans; the denouncer will struggle."

"What shall we do, then?"

"This is the way: Pique Vinaigre has promised to relate to us after dinner his story of Gringalet and Coupe-en-deux. It is going to rain; we will all retire here, and the denouncer will come and station himself in his corner, as usual. We will give a few sous to Pique Vinaigre, that he may begin his story. It will be about the dinner-hour; the guard will see us busy listening to the nonsense about Gringalet and Coupe-en-deux; he will have no suspicion, and will go and take a turn in the kitchen. As soon as he leaves the yard, we shall have a quarter of-an-hour to ourselves; the denouncer will be cooled before the guard returns. I will take charge of him. I have smashed the heads of fellows harder than his; but I don't want any help."

"Hold on!" exclaimed Cardillac; "what shall we do with the

bailiff that comes here to loaf at dinner-time? If he comes into the sitting room, to listen to Pique Vinaigre, and sees that they are cooling Germain, he will sing out for help. That bailiff is not one of us; he has a private cell, and I mistrust him."

"That is true," said Squelette.

"Is there a bailiff here?" exclaimed Frank, who, as we have stated, was the victim of Master Boulard's abuse of confidence; "is there a bailiff here!" repeated he with astonishment; "what is his name?"

"Boulard," said Cardillac.

"It's my man!" exclaimed Frank, clinching his fists; "he is the man who robbed me of my earnings."

"The bailiff?" asked the provost.

"Yes; seven hundred and twenty francs, which he received for me."

"Do you know him? Has he seen you?" asked Squelette.

"To be sure I have seen him, to my misfortune; without him, I should n't have been here."

These regrets grated upon Squelette's ear; he fastened his savage eyes upon Frank, who was answering some questions of his comrades; and, leaning toward the big cripple, the provost said, in a low voice:

"That chap is capable of informing the guard of our design."

"No; I vouch for him, he will denounce nobody; but his conscience is rather tender, and he might attempt to defend Germain. It will be best to keep him out of the yard."

"Sufficient," whispered Squelette; and added, in a loud tone, "I say, Frank, do n't you mean to thrash that bailiff?"

"Leave him to my hands; let him come here, and his account will be settled."

"He will come here soon; get yourself ready."

"I am ready; I shall leave my mark on him."

"That will make a fight; they will send the bailiff to his cell, and Frank to the dungeon," said Squelette to the big cripple, in a low voice; "and we shall thus get clear of both of them."

"What wisdom! Isn't that Squelette a sly one?" said a bandit, with admiration; and speaking aloud, continued, "shall we inform Pique Vinaigre that we shall make use of his story to deceive the guard, and slay the denouncer?"

"No; Pique Vinaigre is too much of a coward. If he knew it, he would n't tell his story; but, when the thing is done, he will keep quiet."

The dinner-bell now sounded. "Come, dogs, go and be fed," said Squelette. "Pique Vinaigre and Germain will soon come in; keep a bright look-out. I am called Dead-beforehand; the denouncer is dead beforehand, also."

CHAPTER XXVI. ..... THE STORY TELLER.

The new prisoner to whom we have alluded, who wore a cotton cap and gray blouse, had listened attentively, and approved with great cordiality the plot which threatened the life of Germain. He was a man of athletic form; and he left the sitting-room with the other prisoners, without exciting particular attention, and soon mingled with the different groups who were crowding about the distributors of food, carrying boiled meat in brass basins, and the bread in large baskets. Each of the prisoners received a piece of boiled beef without bone, which had served to make the meat soup of the morning, in which bread was soaking superior in quality to the bread of soldiers.* The prisoners who have any money, are at liberty to purchase wine at the bar, or go there and drink a mixture of wine and water, called *gobette*. Those who, like Nicholas, received provisions from without, gave an entertainment, to which they invited their particular friends. The present guests of the son of the executed man, were Squelette, Barbillon, and, upon the recommendation of this last individual, Pique Vinaigre, so as to dispose him favorably to relate his story. The hock of ham, hard-boiled eggs, cheese, and white bread, which had been forced from father Micou, were spread upon one of the benches of the sitting-room; and Squelette prepared himself for the repast as coolly as if he was not about to commit a horrible murder.

"Go and see why Pique Vinaigre does not come. While waiting to strangle Germain, I am myself strangled with hunger and thirst. Do not forget to tell the big cripple, that Frank must spring upon the officer, so as to clear them both out of the lion's den."

"Be easy, Dead-beforehand; if Frank don't pounce on the bailiff, it won't be our fault;" and Nicholas left the sitting-room.

At the same moment, Master Boulard entered the yard, smoking a cigar, his hands plunged in his long gray frock-coat, his cap carefully pulled over his ears, his face smiling and blooming; and he perceived Nicholas, who was looking out for Frank. This last person and the big cripple were dining together, seated upon one of the benches of the yard. They did not perceive the bailiff, for their backs were turned to him. Faithful to the advice of Squelette, Nicholas, perceiving the approach of Master Boulard, did not appear to observe him, but drew near to Frank and the big cripple.

"Good day, my brave fellow," said the bailiff to Nicholas.

"Ah! good day, sir. I did n't see you. You have come to take a short walk, as usual?"

"Yes, my boy; and to-day I have two reasons for it. I will tell you why; but in the first place, take some cigars. Come, no ceremony between comrades."

"Thank you, sir. What are your two reasons for walking?"

"You shall soon understand it, my boy. I have no appetite to-day; and I said to myself, 'If I attend the dinner of my companions, and see them work their jaws, perhaps the appetite will come.'"

"That's not such a bad idea; but if you wish to see two chaps masticate nicely," said Nicholas, drawing the bailiff by degrees toward the bench of Frank, whose back was still turned, "look at these two fellows, who swallow everything raw. Your stomach will smart as if you had devoured an entire pot of pickles."

"By Heavens! let me see the phenomenon!" cried Master Boulard.

"Hullo, big cripple!" sung out Nicholas.

Frank and his companion turned their heads. The bailiff remained stupefied, with open mouth, when he recognized the man he had plundered.

Frank, throwing his bread and meat upon the bench, with one leap seized Master Boulard by the throat, exclaiming:

"My money!"

"How—what—you stran—gle me—I——"

"My money!"

"Hear me, my friend."

"My money; and yet it is too late, for the fault is yours that I am here."

"But I——"

"If I am sent to the galleys, it will be your fault, for if I had the money of which you robbed me, I should n't have been forced to steal; I should have remained an honest man as I wished to be, and you, I presume, will be acquitted. They wont punish you, but I will put my mark on you; you have jewels and a gold chain, yet you rob poor people—take that and that—have you got enough? No; take that also!"

"Help! help!" exclaimed the bailiff, rolling under the feet of Frank, who was pummeling him with vengeance.

The remainder of the prisoners, perfectly indifferent to the merits of the fight, formed a ring around the combatants, or rather around the beater and the beaten; for Master Boulard, frightened and out of breath, offered no resistance, endeavoring to parry, as well as he was able, the blows which his adversary showered upon him. Fortunately, the guard answered the cries of the bailiff, and rescued him from the hands of Frank. Master Boulard was assisted to rise; he was pale, trembling, with one of his eyes bunged, and without waiting to pick up his cap, he exclaimed, running toward the gate, "Keeper! keeper! open the door! I wont remain a second!"

"And you who have beaten this gentleman, follow me to the director," said the guard, taking Frank by the collar; "you shall be confined two days in the dungeon."

"I do n't care: I am quits with him," said Frank.

"Look here," said the big cripple, pretending to assist Frank, "not a word of what we intend to do to the denouncer!"

"Be easy; if I was present, perhaps I should defend him, for it is too bad to murder a man; but I am not the chap to denounce you!"

"Come, follow me," said the guard.

"We have got rid of both the bailiff and Frank: it is growing warm for the informer," said Nicholas.

At the moment Frank left the yard, Germain and Pique Vinaigre entered it.

When Germain appeared in the yard, he was no longer the same person. His countenance, which had thus far been downcast and depressed, was now proud and cheerful; he carried his head high, and cast around him a joyful and assured look. He was loved—the horrors of the prison disappeared. Pique Vinaigre followed him in an embarrassed manner. After having made two or three attempts to approach him, he made a desperate

* Such is the fare of the prisons. At the morning meal, each prisoner receives a bowl of vegetable or meat soup, containing a pint of broth; at the evening meal, a piece of beef without bone, or a dish of vegetables—beans, potatoes, &c. The same kind of vegetable is not given on two consecutive days. Prisoners have a right, in the name of humanity, to this healthy and abundant food; but we must repeat, that the most laborious and steady workmen do not eat meat or meat soup ten times a year.

effort, and touched gently the arm of Germain, before the latter had drawn near the group of the prisoners who were watching him from a distance, with a sinister expression, confident that their victim could not escape.

Germain started, in spite of himself, at the touch of Pique Vinaigre, for the face and appearance of the juggler were not very prepossessing; but, calling to mind the advice of Rigolette, and too joyful to curb his benevolence, Germain halted, and said kindly to Pique Vinaigre:

"What do you wish?"

"I wish to thank you!"

"For what?"

"For what your charming visitor intends to do for my poor sister!"

"I do not understand you," said Germain, with surprise.

"I will explain it to you. I just now met at the office of the keeper, who was in the parlor——"

"Yes, he is an excellent man."

"Keepers, usually, do not answer to the name of excellent men, but father Rousselle deserves it. He whispered in my ear, 'Pique Vinaigre, my boy, do you know Mr. Germain?' 'Yes, the black beast of the yard,' I replied; but, interrupting himself, Pique Vinaigre said to Germain, 'Excuse me for calling you black beast—don't mind it—wait for the end.' 'Yes,' I replied, 'I know Mr. Germain, the black beast of the yard!' 'And, perhaps, he is your black beast, Pique Vinaigre,' said the guard, in a severe tone. 'My guard, I am too good-natured, and too much of a poltroon, to permit myself to have any beast, black, white, or gray, and Mr. Germain less than any other; for he does not seem wicked, and they are unjust toward him.' 'You are right, Pique Vinaigre, to stand up for Mr. Germain,' said the guard, 'for he has been very kind to you.' 'For me, my guard, how so?' 'Perhaps it is not to you personally, but, for all that, you should be grateful to him!' answered father Rousselle."

"Explain yourself more clearly," said Germain, smiling.

"That is precisely what I said to the guard: speak more clearly; and he replied to me, 'it is not Mr. Germain, but his pretty little visitor, who has showed great kindness to your sister—she overheard your sister relating to you her domestic troubles, and at the time the poor woman left the parlor, the young girl offered her all the assistance in her power to give.'"

"Excellent Rigolette!" exclaimed Germain, with emotion; "how careful she was, to say nothing of it to me!"

"I then replied to the guard: 'I am but a goose; you are right, Mr. Germain has been kind to me, for the goodness of his visitor is the same as his own, and my sister Jeanne is as dear to me as myself—nay, more than myself!'"

"Poor little Rigolette, I am not astonished at her generosity and obliging disposition!"

"The guard continued, 'I heard all this, without appearing to hear it; now you are informed, if you do not try to be kind to Germain, if you do not inform him if any plot is meditated against him, you will be a miserable wretch, Pique Vinaigre:' 'I am somewhat of a wretch, it is true, my guard; but I do not deserve to be called a complete wretch; and, in short, since the visitor of Mr. Germain has been so kind as to assist poor Jeanne—for she is a good and honest woman, of whom I am proud—I shall do for Mr. Germain all that I can—unfortunately, it is but little.' 'Never mind; do all that you can: I will, also, tell you of a good piece of news to inform Mr. Germain.'"

"What is it?" asked the son of Madame George.

"To-morrow, there will be a vacant cell; and the guard told me to inform you of it."

"Is it possible! how rejoiced I am!" exclaimed Germain; "the good man was right—you have brought me excellent news."

"I believe so; for your place is not with people like us, Mr. Germain," and then, interrupting himself, Pique Vinaigre hastened to add, in a low voice, stooping down, as if he was picking up something, "the prisoners are looking at us; they seem astonished to see us talking together—I must leave you: keep a good look-out for yourself: if they try to pick a quarrel, don't give any answer; they wish for a pretext to get you into a quarrel, and then beat you. Barbillon will be the one to begin the dispute: look out for him, I will try to prevent it."

And Pique Vinaigre arose, as if he had discovered the article for which he had pretended to search.

"Thank you, my good fellow; I shall be prudent," said Germain, quickly, parting from his companion.

Pique Vinaigre, having been informed of the plot of the morning only, which consisted of forcing Germain into a quarrel, and beating him, in order to oblige the keeper to remove him from the ward, was, of course, ignorant of the murder devised by Squelette; and also, that they relied upon his story of Gringalet and Coupe-en-deux, to distract the attention of the guard.

"Come along, you lazy scamp," said Nicholas, meeting Pique Vinaigre; "let alone that miserable ration—I have a feast, and invite you to it."

"Where is it? at the Panier Fleuri, or Petit-Ramponneau?"

"No, you funny dog: in the sitting-room the dinner is served upon a bench: we have a hack of ham, eggs, and cheese—I treat to-day."

"That suits me; but 't is a pity to lose my ration, and a greater pity that my sister should not improve by it: neither she nor her children see meat often, unless it is at the door of the butcher's shop."

"Come, walk along; Squelette is impatient and ravenous; he and Barbillon could devour the whole."

Nicholas and Pique Vinaigre went into the sitting-room; the skeleton was sitting astride the end of the bench, upon which the provisions of Nicholas were spread out. He was swearing and grumbling, while waiting for the master of the feast.

"Here you are, at last, you snail-like loiterer," cried the bandit, on perceiving the story-teller; "what were you about there?"

"He was talking with Germain," said Nicholas, cutting up the ham.

"Ah! you were talking with Germain?" said Squelette, looking attentively at Pique Vinaigre; still, however, continuing to eat greedily.

"Yes," replied the story-teller, "he is not the one who invented bootjacks and hard-eggs. I say this, because I quite adore that vegetable. How stupid he is! Oh! dear, how stupid he is! I had heard that he was playing the spy, in the prison; but he is too much of a bumpkin for that."

"You think so?" said Squelette, exchanging rapid and significant glances with Nicholas and Barbillon.

"I am as sure of it; as that ham is ham! And how the devil would you have him spy upon us? He is always alone; he speaks to nobody, and nobody speaks to him; he runs away from us, as if we had the cholera. If he can make up reports upon that, they must be very fat ones! and, moreover, he can't spy upon us much longer, for he is going into a separate room."

"He!" exclaimed Squelette; "and when?"

"To-morrow morning, there will be a cell vacant."

"You see clearly, that we must kill him at once. He does not sleep in my room. To-morrow, it will be too late—and to-day, we have only till four o'clock, and it is now near three," said the skeleton, whispering to Nicholas, while Pique Vinaigre was talking to Barbillon.

"'Tis all the same," replied Nicholas, appearing to answer what Squelette had said to him; "Germain seems to despise us."

"On the contrary, my children, you intimidate this young man; he considers himself, in prison with you, the lowest of the low. Do you know what he said to me, just now?"

"No: let us hear it."

"He said to me, 'How happy you must be, Pique Vinaigre, to dare to speak with that famous skeleton'—he said famous, as if you were his equal; 'for myself, I wish so much that I dared speak to him—but he produces such an effect upon me—so respectful—so respectful—that were I to see the president of the police, in flesh and blood, with his uniform on, I should not be more dumbfounded.'"

"Did he say that?" asked Squelette, appearing to believe and to be influenced, by the *admiration* Germain had expressed for him.

"He told me so, as truly as you are the greatest brigand upon earth."

"That makes a difference. I will make it up with him. Barbillon had intended picking a quarrel with him, but he had just as well leave it alone."

"Much better!" cried Pique Vinaigre, convinced that he had averted the danger with which Germain had been menaced; "he will do much better, for that poor lad would not snap at a quarrel—he is one of my sort—as courageous as a hare."

"And yet it is a pity," said Squelette; "we had reckoned upon that scrimmage, for our afternoon's amusement. The time will seem long to us!"

"Yes; what can we do then?" said Nicholas.

"As that's the case, let Pique Vinaigre tell us a story," said Barbillon, "I will not pick a quarrel with Germain."

"Agreed!" said the story-teller, "agreed! That is one condition, but there is another—and, without you agree to both of them, I will tell no story."

"Well, tell us your other condition."

"It is, that the honorable society, which is overflowing with capitalists," said Pique Vinaigre, assuming his showman's accent, "will be pleased to grant me a contribution of twenty sous! Twenty sous! gentlemen, to hear the famous Pique Vinaigre, who has had the honor of holding forth, before the most renowned steal-alls, before the most celebrated slit-wezands, of France and

of Navarre; and who is very shortly expected at Brest and at Toulon, where he repairs, by order of the government! Twenty sous! why, 't is dirt-cheap, gentlemen!"

"Well, well! the twenty sous will be made up for you, after you have told your story!"

"After? no—before!" cried Pique Vinaigre.

"Hollo! what do you mean by that? Do you think that we are capable of swindling you of twenty sous?" said Squelette, in a mortified tone.

"Not at all," replied Pique Vinaigre; "I honor the pègre with my confidence—it is to spare its purse, that I demand the twenty sous in advance."

"By your word of honor?"

"Yes, gentlemen; for, after I have told my story, you will be so delighted, that it would not be twenty sous—but twenty, ay! even a hundred francs—which you would force upon me! I know myself, and I might have the meanness to accept it. You, therefore, see, that from economy, you will do better to give the twenty sous in advance."

"It is not blarney you are wanting in!"

"My tongue is all I have, and I must, therefore, use it as I can—and, besides, the real secret of the matter is, that my sister and her children are in a terrible straight; and twenty sous, in a small family, make some difference."

"Why does she not steal, this sister of yours, and her brats, too, if they are old enough?" asked Nicholas.

"Do n't speak of it, she quite afflicts me. She dishonors me. I am too tender-hearted."

"Say too stupid, since you encourage her!"

"'T is true, I encourage her in the vice of being honest; but that 's the only trade she is good at. I am perfectly ashamed of her; but is it agreed? I will tell you the famous history of Gringalet and Coupe-en-deux, but I must have my twenty sous, and Barbillon will not pick a quarrel with that simpleton, Germain."

"You shall have your twenty sous, and Barbillon shall not pick a quarrel with that simpleton, Germain," said Squelette.

"Then open wide your ears, you are about to hear something most wonderful. But see, it rains, and sends in my customers; there will be no occasion now, to go to fetch them." And it began actually to rain—the prisoners left the yards, and came to shelter themselves in the sitting-room, accompanied by the keeper.

We have before stated, that this sitting-room was a long, wide hall, paved with flag-stones, having three windows looking on the yard; in the centre was the stove, near which Squelette, Barbillon, Nicholas and Pique Vinaigre, had placed themselves. Upon a sign made to him by the provost, the big cripple joined this group. Germain came in, one of the last, absorbed by his delightful thoughts. He mechanically seated himself upon the edge of the last window in the hall, a place which he usually occupied, and which no one contended for; it being at a distance from the stove, round which the prisoners always crowded.

We have already stated, that about fifteen of the prisoners had been informed of the treachery with which Germain was reproached, and of the murder by which he was to be punished for it; but this project being soon promulgated, counted as many adherents to it as there were prisoners. These wretches, in their blind cruelty, considered this horrible snare as a legitimate revenge; and saw, therein, a certain guaranty against future denunciations by the informers.

Germain, Pique Vinaigre, and the keeper, were the only persons ignorant of what was going to take place. The general attention was divided between the executioner, the victim, and the story-teller, who was about innocently to deprive Germain of the only assistance which the latter could hope for; for it was almost certain that the keeper, seeing the prisoners attentive to Pique Vinaigre's story, would consider his presence as unnecessary, and would take advantage of this moment of quiet to withdraw, to get his dinner.

And so it really turned out; for, as soon as all the prisoners had come into the hall, Squelette said to the keeper—"I say, old one, Pique Vinaigre has had a good idea; he is going to tell us his story of Gringalet and Coupe-en-deux; the weather is so bad, you would not send a police-officer out of doors, and we shall wait here quietly till it 's time to go to our nests."

"That 's true enough: when he is jabbering, you are quiet, and we have no occasion to keep so closely at your elbows," replied the keeper.

"Yes," rejoined Squelette, "but Pique Vinaigre asks pretty dear for story-telling; he wants twenty sous."

"Yes, the small trifle of twenty sous—a mere nothing," cried Pique Vinaigre; yes, gentlemen, a mere nothing; for a man must be without a farthing in his pocket, who would forego the satisfaction of hearing the adventures of poor little Gringalet, of the most terrible Coupe-en-deux, and of the ruffian Gargousse. It is a story which will make your hearts bleed, and your hair stand right on end. Gentlemen, who among you cannot dispose of the trifle of one sous, or, if you prefer to count by kilogrammes, the small trifle of five centimes, to have his heart melted, and his hair frightened off his head?"

"I put in two sous," said Squelette, throwing down the money before Pique Vinaigre; "come, with the pègre be niggardly in paying for such amusement?" added he, looking significantly at his accomplices. Several sous were thrown down, to the great joy of Pique Vinaigre, who was thinking of his sister, while he picked them up; "eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve, thirteen," cried he, as he took up the money; "go it, you rich ones, you great capitalists, and other Crœsuses; make another little effort—you would not, surely, stop at thirteen; 'tis an unlucky number: only seven sous more—the small trifle of seven sous. How! gentlemen, shall it be said that the pègre of the lion's den cannot find seven sous more—seven miserable sous? Oh! gentlemen, you would make one believe you have been sent here unjustly, or that your fingers had been most unlucky."

The piercing voice and the jokes of Pique Vinaigre had awakened Germain from his revery. As much to follow the advice of Rigolette, by making himself popular, as to give a trifling assistance to the poor devil who had evinced a desire to be of service to him, he rose, and threw a ten sous piece at the feet of the story-teller; who cried out, pointing to the generous donor—"Ten sous, gentlemen! you see, I spoke of capitalists. Honor to that gentleman! he has behaved like a great banker, an embassador, to further the amusement of the company. Yes, gentlemen; for it is to him that you will owe the greater part of the Gringalet and Coupe-en-deux—and you will thank him for it. As to the three sous over, I will earn them by imitating the voices of the different characters in the story, instead of speaking as you and I do. This is another pleasure which you will owe to this great capitalist, whom you ought to adore."

"Do n't give us so much blarney, but begin," said Squelette.

"One moment, gentlemen; only one moment," said Pique Vinaigre; "it would be only fair that this great capitalist, who has given me ten sous, should have the best place, except our provost, who, of course, chooses first."

This proposal so well served the projects of Squelette, that he called out—"That's true; after myself, he should have the best place;" and the bandit gave another significant glance at the prisoners.

"Yes, yes; let him come this way," said they; "let him sit down on the front bench."

"You see, young man, your liberality is recompensed; the honorable society acknowledges you have a right to the first place," said Pique Vinaigre to Germain.

Believing that his liberality had, really, the effect of producing a favorable change among his hateful companions, and enchanted to follow, in this way, the advice of Rigolette, Germain, notwithstanding his great repugnance to them, left his favorite place, and drew near to the story-teller. The latter, assisted by Nicholas and Barbillon, having arranged around the stove the four or five benches which were in the hall, said, with emphasis: "This is the first tier of boxes—honor where honor is due—first to the capitalist; now let all those who have paid, sit down upon the benches," gayly added Pique Vinaigre, firmly believing that, thanks to him, Germain had nothing more to fear; "and those who have not paid, may sit down on the ground, or remain standing, as they think fit."

Let us now point out the positions in which the different personages in this scene were placed. Pique Vinaigre, standing near the stove, was preparing to begin his story; near him, Squelette, also standing, and glaring at Germain, ready to pounce upon him the moment the keeper left the hall. At some distance from Germain were Nicholas, Barbillon, Cadillac, and other prisoners; among whom was remarked the man with the blue cotton cap and the gray blouse; these occupied the outer bench. The greater number of the prisoners, grouped here and there, some seated on the ground, and others standing, leaning against the walls, composed the back-ground of the picture, lighted, *a la Rembrandt*, by the three side-windows, which threw strong gleams of light, with massive shades, upon faces so various in character, and so strongly marked.

We must also mention that the keeper, who, unwillingly, by his departure, was to give the signal for the murder of Germain, was standing by the door, which was half-opened.

"Are we to begin?" asked Pique Vinaigre of Squelette.

"Silence among the pègre," said the latter, turning half round; and then addressing himself to Pique Vinaigre, continued, "Now, begin your story; we are all listening."

A profound silence reigned throughout the hall.

CHAPTER XXVII. ..... GRINGALET AND COUPE-EN-DEUX.

Nothing can be more sweet, more salutary, more precious than your words; they charm, they encourage, they improve.—WOLFRAND, *Book IV.*

BEFORE beginning Pique Vinaigre's story, we will remind the reader, that, by a singular contrast, the majority of prisoners, notwithstanding their shameless wickedness, have a great liking to simple stories—we would not say childish ones—in which are seen, by the laws of an inexorable fatality, the oppressed revenged of his tyrant, after trials and misfortunes without number.

Far be it from us to draw the slightest parallel between corrupted people, and the poor and honest mass; but have we not seen with what mad applause the audience of the small theatres of the boulevards greet the deliverance of a victim, and with what passionate maledictions they pursue the oppressor or the traitor?

We usually deride these uncultivated testimonies of sympathy for that which is good, feeble and persecuted; of aversion for that which is powerful, unjust and cruel. It appears to us that we are wrong.

Nothing can, in itself, be more consoling than the evidence of these popular feelings.

Is it not evident, that these salutary interests might become fixed principles among those unfortunate people, whom ignorance and poverty incessantly expose to the subversive attacks of evil? Why should we not hope for every good, from a people whose good moral sense so invariably manifests itself?—from a people, who, notwithstanding the magic influence of art, would never permit that a dramatic work should close by the triumph of the wicked, and by the sufferings of the just?

This fact, although disdained and mocked at, appears to us of very great importance, by reason of the tendencies which it establishes; and which, we repeat, are often even found among the most corrupted beings, when they are, as it were, *at rest*, uttered from the instigations of others, or from criminal temptations.

In a word, since men, hardened in crime, can still sometimes sympathize in the recital and in the expression of elevated sentiments, should we not thence infer, that all have, more or less, within them, a love for that which is good, and grand, and just; but that misery and brutal sottishness, by warping and stifling these divine instincts, are the primary causes of human depravity?

Is it not evident, that man generally does not become wicked, unless he is unhappy? and that to snatch a man from the terrible temptations of want, by an equitable melioration of his physical condition, would be to render practicable, those virtues of which he approves?

The impression caused by the recital of Pique Vinaigre will demonstrate, or rather will illustrate, we trust, some of the ideas whice we have just advanced.

Pique Vinaigre, then, began his story in the following terms, amid the profound silence in which his auditory was hushed:

"It is some time ago, that the events occurred, of which I am about to relate the history to this honorable society. That which was called Little Poland, was not then destroyed. The honorable society knows, or it does not know, what Little Poland was."

"I know what it was," said the prisoner in the blue cap and gray blouse: "it was some small houses near the rue de Rocher and the rue Pepinière."

"Quite right, my boy," replied Pique Vinaigre; "and the quarter of the Cité, which is not, however, composed of palaces, would be, as one may say, the rue de la Paix, or the rue de Rivoli, compared with Little Poland. What a hole! but otherwise a famous haunt for the bandits. There were no streets in it, but alleys—no houses, but paltry ruins—no pavements, but a soft carpeting of mud and manure, which kindly prevented the noise of carriages from disturbing you, if any passed; but none did pass there. From morning till night, and, above all, from night to morning, that which one heard unceasingly, was cries of 'watch! watch! help! help! murder!' but the watchmen did not trouble themselves. The more people were knocked on the head in Little Poland, so many the less were there to be arrested.

"You should have seen the stirring place it was. Few jewellers, or silversmiths, or bankers, lodged in that vicinity; but, to make amends, there were a numerous company of organ-grinders, mountebanks, punchinellos, and showmen of wild beasts. Among the latter, was one named Coupe-en-deux*—so wicked was he; but, above all, he was most wicked toward children. They called him Coupe-en-deux, because, 't was said, that with an axe, and at one blow, he had cut in two a little Savoyard."

At this passage in the story of Pique Vinaigre, the prison clock struck a quarter-past-three. The prisoners retire to their dormitories at four o'clock; the crime of Squelette was to be consummated before that hour.

"Ten thousand thunders!" whispered he to the big cripple; "the keeper does not leave us!"

"Don't be alarmed; when once the story is fairly set agoing, he'll be off."

Pique Vinaigre continued:

"Nobody knew whence came Coupe-en-deux. Some said he was Italian, some a Gipsy, some Turk, some African; the good women said he was a magician—although a magician in those days would appear singular. I should myself be tempted to agree with the good women What made them believe this, was, that he had always with him a large red monkey, called Gargousse, who was so cunning and so spiteful, one could have said the devil was in his belly. I shall presently remind you of Gargousse. As to Coupe-en-deux, I shall describe him to you: His complexion was similar to that of boot-tops; his hair was red, like to his monkey's skin; his eyes were green—and what still more leads me to think, with the good women, that he was a magician—his tongue was black."

"His tongue black?" cried Barbillon.

"As black as ink," replied Pique Vinaigre.

"Why was that?"

"Because, some time before he was born, his mother, probably, had talked about a negro," rejoined Pique Vinaigre, with diffident assurance. "To this delightful acquisition, Coupe-en-deux added the profession of keeping, I know not how many, tortoises, monkeys, guinea-pigs, white mice, foxes, and marmots, which corresponded to an equal number of young Savoyards or deserted children. Each morning Coupe-en-deux distributed to each of the children his animal, and a small piece of black bread, and then, 'off with you,' to beg a halfpenny or dance a Catalina. Those who, at night, did not bring back fifteen sous, at least, were beaten; but, oh! beaten in such a way, that one could hear the children shriek from one extremity of Little Poland to the other.

"I must tell you, also, that there lived in Little Poland, a man who was called the Ancient, because he was the oldest of his species in that quarter; and who was, one may say, the mayor, the provost, the justice of the peace, or rather of war, for it was in his court—he kept an eating-house and wine-shop—they went to comb each others' heads, when there was no other means of settling a difference. Although old, the Ancient was as strong as Hercules, and much feared—they swore only by him, in little Poland. When he said 't was well, every one said 't was very well—and if he said 't was bad, all said 't was very bad. He was, at bottom, a good man, but much feared. When, for example, people of great strength oppressed, and rendered the weak miserable—oh! then look out!

"As the Ancient was the neighbor of Coupe-en-deux, he had, when the latter first established himself, heard the children shriek on account of the blows which the wild beast showman gave them; but he said to him—'Should I hear these children shriek again, I will make you scream in your turn; and, as your voice is stronger, I shall lay on the heavier.'"

"The Ancient was a droll fellow: I like that Ancient, I do," said the prisoner in the blue cap.

"And so do I," added the keeper, drawing nearer to the group.

Squelette could not restrain a movement of angry impatience. Pique Vinaigre continued:

"Thanks to the Ancient, who had threatened Coupe-en-deux, the nightly cries of children were no longer heard in Little Poland; but the unfortunate innocents suffered no less; for, if they did not shriek when their master beat them, it was because they feared that, if they did, they would be beat still more; as for complaining to the Ancient, they had not the slightest thought of it.

"By means of the fifteen sous which each little fellow brought him every day, Coupe-en-deux lodged them, boarded them, and clothed them. In the evening, a bit of black bread, as at breakfast time—so much for their board; he never gave them any clothes—so much for their clothing. He sent them up every night, pell-mell, with their animals, on the same straw, and in a garret, which they climbed into by a ladder through a trap-door—so much for their lodging. The number of animals and children being duly completed, he locked up the trap-door, and then withdrew the ladder.

"You can readily imagine the clatter and the uproar which all these monkeys, guinea-pigs, white mice, tortoises, marmots and children, made, huddled together in a garret of very small dimensions. Coupe-en-deux slept in a room below them, with his great monkey, Gargousse, tied to his bed-foot. When there was too much grumbling, or too much crying, in the garret, Coupe-en-deux rose up, took his long whip, got up the ladder, opened the trap-door, and then lashed about him in the dark, both right and left.

As he had always about fifteen of these children—and some of them sometimes brought him as much as twenty sous per day—Coupe-en-deux, after paying all expenses, which were not very heavy,

*Cut-in-two.

had for himself, four to five francs per day. With this, he lived right merrily; for you must remark, he was the greatest swiller upon earth, and that he was regularly dead drunk, at least once a day. This was his regimen; without it, he used to say, he would have a head-ache all the live-long day. I must tell you, though, that with his profits he used to buy sheep's-hearts for Gargousse, for his great monkey swallowed raw meat like any cannibal.

"But I see the honorable society are expecting I should say something about Gringalet; here he is, gentlemen——'

"Oh! let us see Gringalet, and then I'll go and eat my soup," said the keeper.

The skeleton exchanged a ferocious look of satisfaction with the big cripple.

"Among the children whom Coupe-en-deux employed with his animals," rejoined Pique Vinaigre, "there was a poor and miserable little atom, surnamed Gringalet. Having neither father nor mother, brother nor sister—without home or friends, he found himself alone, perfectly alone, in this wide world, which he had been thrown into, without his leave being asked, and which he might quit, without attracting the slightest notice. It was not for his pleasure he was called Gringalet: no, no! for he was meagre, and puling, and suffering, to a degree that excited pity. You would have thought him only seven or eight years old, although he was thirteen. If he appeared to be not half that age, it was not from ill-will on his part; for he had fared so badly—getting food, upon the average, only every other day, and then, so little—oh! so little, and of such bad quality—so bad, that he had succeeded marvellously well, in appearing to be even seven years old."

"Poor little fellow! I could fancy that I see him," said the prisoner in the blue cap; "there are so many children like him, half-starved, upon the streets of Paris."

"They must begin their education early," replied Pique Vinaigre, smiling bitterly, "that they may in the end be used to it."

"Come, now! get on! make better way!" said the skeleton, abruptly; "the keeper is getting out of patience; his soup is cooling."

"Ah! bah! that's no matter," said the keeper. "I wish to become better acquainted with Gringalet; it is so amusing."

"It is really very interesting," added Germain, who had been very attentive to the story.

"Oh! thank you, for saying that, my capitalist," replied Pique Vinaigre; "that gives me greater pleasure even than your ten sous piece."

"You confounded drawler! will you put an end to our suspense?" exclaimed Squelette.

"Well, don't be in such a hurry. One day, Coupe-en-deux found Gringalet in the street, dying with cold and hunger; he would have done as well to let him die there. As Gringalet was weak, he was naturally timid, and as he was timid, he had become the laughing-stock and suffer-all of the other boys, who beat him and caused him so much misery, that he would have been spiteful and malicious, had not strength and courage been wanting in him. But, no: when they had beaten him, he cried, saying: 'I never did harm to any one, and every one harms me—this is unjust. Oh! were I only strong and bold!' You will perhaps imagine that Gringalet was about to add: 'Would I not revenge myself upon those who hurt me?' Well: he said no such thing! he said: 'Oh! were I strong and bold, I would defend the weak against the strong; for I am weak, and the strong have made me suffer.' In the mean time, being too much like a flea to prevent the strong from injuring the weak; beginning with himself, he prevented the large animals from devouring the little ones."

"Is not that a very funny idea?" said the prisoner, in the blue cap.

"And that which was most funny," rejoined the story-teller, "was that one would have said, with this idea, Gringalet consoled himself for being beaten; and this proves that, at the bottom, his heart was not bad."

"By Jupiter! there can be no doubt of it—quite the contrary," said the keeper. "Isn't he amusing now, this Pique Vinaigre?"

At this moment the clock struck half-past three. The intended executioner of Germain and the big cripple exchanged significant glances. The hour drew nigh; the keeper still remained; and some of the least hardened prisoners appeared almost to forget the sinister intentions of Squelette, to listen with deep attention to Pique Vinaigre's story.

"When I said," continued the latter, "that Gringalet prevented the larger animals from eating up the smaller ones, you will comprehend that Gringalet did not meddle with matters concerning the tigers, the lions, the wolves, or even the foxes and the monkeys belonging to the menagerie of Coupe-en-deux—he was too much afraid for that. But when he saw, for example, a spider lying in ambush in his net, to catch in it a poor silly fly buzzing about in the sun's lovely beams, and not doing harm to any one—crack! Gringalet with his stick tore down the fatal web, set free the fly, and crushed the spider like a real Cæsar—yes, like a true Cæsar—for he turned pale when touching these ugly reptiles; he acquired resolution then, for formerly he had feared a cock-chafer, and had been a long time in becoming familiar even with the tortoise, which Coupe-en-deux gave him in charge each morning. Therefore, Gringalet, in overcoming the fear which spiders had occasioned him, that he might hinder the poor flies from being eaten, showed himself——"

"Showed himself as daring, after his fashion, as a man who attacks a wolf to snatch a sheep from out his fangs," said the prisoner in the blue cap.

"Or as a man who should have attacked Coupe-en-deux, to liberate Gringalet from his clutches," added Barbillon, who was also much interested.

"Just as you say," said Pique Vinaigre; "for after these good actions, Gringalet did not feel so miserable. He who never laughed, then smiled, and looked quite bold; wearing his cap on one side, when he had a cap, and hummed the Marseilloise with quite a conquering air. In these moments, not a spider would have dared to look him in the face. Another time it was a grasshopper which was drowning in the gutter, and Gringalet quickly immersed two of his fingers, and pulled out the insect, which he afterward placed upon a blade of grass. A master swimmer, who had gained a medal, and who had fished up his ten drowning persons, at fifty francs a head, could not have felt prouder than Gringalet, when he saw his grasshopper kick and shake its legs, and then jump away. And yet the grasshopper gave him neither money nor a medal, and did not say even thank'ee to him, more than the fly. 'But, Pique Vinaigre,' the honorable society will say to me, 'what sort of pleasure could Gringalet, whom everybody thumped, find in being the preserver of grasshoppers and the executioner of spiders? As others did harm to him, why should he not have revenged himself, by doing harm to others, according to his strength? for instance, by throwing flies to the spiders, that they might eat them, or by letting the grasshoppers drown themselves at leisure, or even drowning them on purpose?'"

"Yes, truly, why did he not revenge himself in that way?" said Nicholas.

"What good would that have done him?" said another.

"Why, to do them harm, because they did harm to him"

"Well, now, for my part, I can understand his liking to save flies, the poor little fellow," rejoined the man in the blue cap; "he said to himself, perhaps, 'Who knows but I may be saved in that way?'"

"Our comrade is quite right," exclaimed Pique Vinaigre; "he has given the very marrow of what I was about to place before the honorable society.

"Gringalet was not very cunning; he saw no further than the extremity of his own nose; but he had said to himself, 'Coupe-en-deux is my spider; perhaps, some day or other, somebody will do for me what I do for the poor flies—that they will destroy his web for him, and take me out of his claws;' for till then he would not have dared to think, even, of running away from his master; he would have thought himself sure of being killed.

"However, one day, when neither himself nor his tortoise had been lucky, and they had earned between them but three sous, Coupe-en-deux beat him, the poor child, so severely, that Gringalet could no longer bear it. Tired of being rebuffed and tortured by all the world, he watched the moment when the trap-door of the garret remained open, and while Coupe-en-deux was giving the animals their supper, he slid down the ladder."

"Ah! so much the better," said one of the prisoners.

"But why did he not go and complain to the Ancient?" said the blue cap; "he would have given a sound thrashing to Coupe-en-deux."

"Yes, but he did not dare to do so; he was too much afraid; he would try to run away. Unfortunately, Coupe-en-deux had seen him; he catches hold of him by the neck, and hoists him up into the garret. This time, Gringalet, thinking of what awaited him, trembled all over; for he was not at the end of his troubles. By-the-by, while talking of the troubles of Gringalet, I must tell you something about Gargousse, the great monkey—the favorite of Coupe-en-deux. This savage animal, indeed, was as tall as Gringalet; think, what a height for a monkey! And now I will tell you why they did not lead him about the streets, and show him like the other animals. It was because Gargousse was so spiteful and so strong, that there was only, among all these children, one boy, a native of Auvergne, a resolute chap of fourteen years of age, who, after having several times fought with him hand to hand, had at last been able to master him—to lead him, and hold him by a chain; and notwithstanding this, many times afterward there had been several battles, in which Gargousse had

bit his leader so as to make him bleed. Tired of this, the little Auvergnese said to himself one day, 'Well, well; you scoundrel monkey, I will be revenged for this.' One morning, then, he went out with his charge, as usual; and to entrap him the more surely, he bought him a sheep's heart, which he threw down to him. While Gargousse was eating it, he passed a cord through a link of his chain, tied the cord to a tree; and when the rascal of a monkey was well secured, he lays upon him such a volley of blows, given with a good thick stick! but such a volley of blows! you might have seen the fire fly from the monkey's eyes!"

"Well done! Bravo! my little Auvergnese! Lay it on thick, my boy! Hit him hard! Break that rascally Gargousse's back!" exclaimed several of the prisoners.

"And I assure you, he hit him with good heart," rejoined Pique Vinaigre. "You should have heard how Gargousse shrieked, and grinned, and ground his teeth—jumped, vaulted, here and there; but the Auvergnese followed him well with his stick, crying, 'there! there! how do you like it?' Unfortunately, monkeys are like cats—they die very hard. Gargousse was as cunning as he was spiteful. When he saw—one may well say so—what sort of wood was warming for him, and when the volley was at its greatest fury, he cut a final caper, and fell down at the foot of the tree; his limbs quivered for a moment, and then he laid, as if stone-dead—he did not move more than a log. The Auvergnese required nothing further: thinking the monkey dead, he walked off, never intending to put his foot in Coupe-en-deux's quarters. But the villainous Gargousse was still watching him with his eyes nearly closed; though so unmercifully mauled. As soon as he found himself alone, and the Auvergnese at some distance, he bit the cord in two which bound him to the tree. The boulevard Monceaux, where he had received his drubbing, was not far from Little Poland; the monkey knew his way as well as his paternoster; he put on his best legs, and dragging his chain after him, made his way briskly to his master's house; who roared, and foamed, and swore, at seeing his dear monkey so horribly belabored. But that's not all: from that time forward. Gargousse had borne such malice against children in general, that Coupe-en-deux, who was not over tender, had not dared to give him in charge of any one, for fear of accident; for Gargousse might have strangled, or even devoured, a child; and all the little showmen well knowing this, would rather have allowed themselves to be flayed by Coupe-en-deux, than to have gone near the monkey."

"I must decidedly go and eat my soup," said the keeper, taking a step toward the door; "this devilish Pique Vinaigre, would make the birds come down from the trees, to listen to him! I can't tell where he fishes out all his stories."

"At last, the keeper's off," said Squelette, whispering to the big cripple. "I am in a complete fever; a raging fire runs burning within me. Take care to form a circle round the informer; I will take care of the rest!"

"Well now, mind you behave yourselves," said the keeper, going toward the door.

"We'll be as quiet as sucking-doves," said Squelette, drawing nearer to Germain, while the big cripple and Nicholas, after having made a sign to each other, made two steps in the same direction.

"Oh! most respectable keeper—you are going away, at the most interesting part of the story!" said Pique Vinaigre, in a reproachful tone.

Had it not been for the big cripple, who rapidly seized the arm of the skeleton, the latter would have thrown himself upon Pique Vinaigre.

"How! at the most interesting part?" replied the keeper, turning toward the story-teller.

"I believe you," said Pique Vinaigre; "you have no idea of what you are going to lose—the most delightful part of my story is just beginning!"

"Don't listen to him," said Squelette, with difficulty restraining his rage; "he is not in cue, to-day. I think his story most horribly stupid."

"Horribly stupid!" exclaimed Pique Vinaigre, his self-love, as a story-teller, being wounded. "Well! keeper, I beg, I entreat you, to stop to the end of it! I have enough still, for a good quarter of an hour—and, besides, as your soup is cold already, what difference can it make to you? I shall hasten to the catastrophe, that you may have time to eat it, before we go up stairs to the dormitories."

"Well! I will stop; but make haste," said the keeper, again drawing nearer to the speaker.

"And, without flattering myself, you are quite right in stopping. You have never heard anything like it, particularly the conclusion: there is the triumphal procession of the monkey and Gringalet, escorted by all the little showmen, and all the inhabitants of Little Poland! I do not, upon my honor, wish to play the trumpeter; but it is really superb!"

"Tell it quickly, then, my good fellow," said the keeper, coming back to the stove.

Squelette shook with rage; he almost despaired of accomplishing his crime. The hour for retiring to the bed-rooms once arrived, Germain would be saved; for he did not sleep in the same ward as his implacable enemy; and the next day, as we have before said, he was to occupy one of the vacant cells, *a la pistole*. And, besides, Squelette perceived, by the interruptions made by several of the prisoners, that they were, thanks to the story of Pique Vinaigre, imbued with feelings, almost, of pity: perhaps they might not, now, be inclined to look on, with ferocious indifference, while a frightful murder was being committed—of which their impassibility would render them accomplices. Squelette could have prevented the story-teller from finishing his recital; but then his last hope of seeing the keeper leave them, before the hou when Germain would be in safety, would at once have vanished

"Ah! it is horribly stupid, is it?" rejoined Pique Vinaigre, "well! the honorable society will decide that question. There was not then, in the world, a more savage animal than the great monkey, Gargousse; who was, above all, as spiteful as his master toward children: what does Coupe-en-deux decide upon, in order to punish Gringalet for wishiug to run away? That you will know presently. In the mean time, as I said, he seized hold of the poor child, stuffed him back into the garret for the night, and said to him—'To-morrow morning, when all your companions are gone, I shall be after you; and you will see what I do to those who try to run away from me.' I leave you to imagine the terrible night poor Gringalet passed, after all this—he hardly closed his eyes: he asked himself what Coupe-en-deux could do to him? By dint of repeating this question to himself, he, at last, fell asleep—but what sleep! good Heaven! he had a dream—a frightful dream; that is to say, the commencement of it was frightful—you will hear:

"He dreamed that he was one of those poor flies, of which he had saved so many from the spider's webs; and that, in his turn, he had fallen into an enormous and strong web, in which he struggled with all his might, but without being able to get out of it. Presently he saw, secretly and stealthily approaching, a sort of monster, which had the face of Coupe-en-deux, upon a spider's body! My poor Gringalet, as you may very well suppose, began again to struggle; but the more efforts that he made, the more did he become entangled in the web; as generally happens with the poor flies. At last, the spider got close to him—touched him—and he felt the great, cold and hairy claws of the horrid monster, drawing him, and winding round about him, to devour him! He gave himself up for lost; but, suddenly, he heard a kind of buzzing, clear, loud, and shrill; and he saw a lovely, golden fly, which had a sort of dart, sharp and brilliant as a diamond needle, flying, with furious looks, around the spider; and a voice—when I say a voice, you must understand, a fly's voice—a voice, which said to him: '*Poor little fly! thou hast saved flies; the spider does not*——' Unfortunately, Gringalet started and awoke; and did not see the conclusion of the dream: notwithstanding, he felt a little reassured, and said to himself, 'Perhaps the golden fly, with his diamond dart, would have killed the spider, had I but seen the end of the dream!' But Gringalet, though he did all he could to quiet and console himself; as the night wore away, his fears returned so thickly on him, that, at last, he forgot the dream; or rather, he retained only that part of it which was terrifying—the great web in which he had been enveloped, and the enormous spider, with Coupe-en-deux's grim visage. You will readily conceive, what fearful tremblings he must have undergone; only think! alone, completely alone, without a soul who would defend him!

"In the morning, when he saw, through the small, loop-hole window of the garret, the day breaking, little by little, his fears redoubled. The moment was approaching, when he was to be left alone with Coupe-en-deux: then he threw himself upon his knees, in the middle of the garret, shedding torrents of tears; he entreated his comrades to obtain pardon for him from Coupe-en-deux, or to assist him in escaping from him, if there was any chance of doing so. But no such chance! Some of them, from fear of their master, others from indifference, and the rest from sheer maliciousness, refused to render to poor Gringalet, the service he asked of them."

"The miserable young rascals!" exclaimed the prisoner in the blue cap. "They had neither hearts nor souls!"

"That's true," added another; "it's quite vexatious to see this poor little fellow abandoned by all nature."

"And alone, and without any one to help him!" rejoined the blue cap. "For any one who can only stretch out his neck, without helping himself, always fills one with pity; and when one has teeth to bite with, it makes all the difference—but, i' faith! if you have tusks to show, show them and defend yourself, my boys."

"That's true," said several of the prisoners.

"Tell me," said Squelette, no longer able to conceal his rage, and addressing himself to the blue cap, "will you hold your tongue, or not? Did I not order silence in the pégre? Am I, or am I not, the provost here?"

The only answer which the blue cap gave, was to look the skeleton steadfastly in the face, and then made him that mocking gesture, so much practiced among mischievous urchins, which consists in placing on the extremity of the nose, the thumb of the right hand, spreading it like a fan, and then joining to it the left hand, extended in the same elegant position. The blue cap accompanied this mute *reply* with so comical a look, that many of the prisoners burst into a loud laugh, while others, on the contrary, appeared astounded at the audacity of the new prisoner; so much was the skeleton dreaded. The latter shook his fist at the blue cap, and said, grinding his teeth with rage: "We shall settle our accounts to-morrow."

"And I will add them up on your ugly mug. I will count up seventeen thumps upon your nose, and carry nothing."

Fearing that the keeper might find a new reason for prolonging his stay with them, in order to prevent the fray, which seemed impending, the skeleton calmly replied: "That is not the question. I have the charge of keeping order here; have I not, keeper?"

"That's very true," replied the latter. "Do not interrupt him any more; and you, Pique Vinaigre, go on. But, my good fellow, proceed a little quicker."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE TRIUMPH OF GRINGALET AND GARGOUSSE.

"Gringalet, thus finding himself abandoned by all the world," continued Pique Vinaigre, "resigned himself to his unhappy fate. The broad daylight shone upon them, and all the little boys prepared themselves to leave their houses with their animals. Coupe-en-deux opened the trap-door, and called them one by one, to give them each their morsel of black bread. All of them went down the ladder, and Gringalet, less alive than dead, remained huddled up in one corner of the garret with his tortoise, and was almost as motionless. He looked at his companions as they descended, one after the other, and would have given all he had to do as they did. At length the last had left the garret. The poor child's heart beat violently. He hoped that, perhaps, his master might forget him; but no such luck. All at once, he hears Coupe-en-deux, who had remained at the foot of the ladder, calling with his gruff voice, 'Gringalet! Gringalet!' 'Here I am, my master.' 'Come down, directly, or I'll come and fetch you,' rejoined Coupe-en-deux.

"Gringalet now thought himself at his last hour. 'Come, come,' said he to himself, though trembling in every joint, and remembering his dream; 'you are now in the web, poor little fly, and the spider's going to eat you.' After having very gently put his tortoise on the ground, he said a sort of farewell to it; for he had at length become attached to the animal. He approached the trap-door, and placed his foot on the top round of the ladder to go down; when Coupe-en-deux, seizing him by his little leg, as meagre as a spindle, dragged him with such force and suddenness, that Gringalet came down at a full run, and scraped his face along the whole length of the ladder.

"What a pity that the Ancient of Little Poland had not been there! what a dance he would have given to Coupe-en-deux!" said the blue cap. "It is in such moments as that, that it is good to have great strength."

"Yes, my brave fellow! yes; but unfortunately, the Ancient was not there. Coupe-en-deux then caught the child by the band of his trowsers, and carried him into his own filthy room, where he kept the great monkey chained to the foot of his bed. At the mere sight of the child, the savage animal began to jumpand bound about, to grind his teeth like a mad beast, and to spring the whole length of his chain toward Gringalet, as if he wanted to devour him. Poor Gringalet! how will he get out of this? If he falls within the grip of the monkey, he will at once be strangled!"

"Thunder and lightning! but this makes one's flesh creep," exclaimed the blue cap. "At this moment, I could not hurt even a flea! What say you, my friends?"

"Faith, nor could I"—"Nor I"—"Nor I," exclaimed several of the prisoners.

At this moment, the prison clock struck three-quarters past three.

Squelette, fearing more and more that he would not have time enough, cried out furiously, on hearing these interruptions, which seemed to announce that several of the prisoners were much softened by the story: "Silence in the pégre! This teller of dismal stories will never get to the end of it, if you talk as much as he does." All then were silenced.

Pique Vinaigre continued:

"When one reflects, that Gringalet had great difficulty in even accustoming himself to his tortoise, and that the most courageous of his comrades trembled at the very name of Gargousse, you can conceive his terror when carried by his master close to this villainous monkey. 'Pardon, my master—pardon!' cried he, his teeth chattering as if he had the ague: 'pardon, master! I will never do so again—I promise you I will not!' The poor little fellow cried, 'I will never do so again,' without knowing what he said; for he could not reproach himself with having done any harm. But Coupe-en-deux paid very little attention to this. In spite of the cries of the child, who struggled to get from him, he placed him within the reach of Gargousse, who instantly seized upon him."

A sort of thrill ran through the audience, who had become more and more attentive.

"How stupid I should have been to have gone away!" said the keeper, approaching still nearer to the groups of prisoners.

"And this is nothing yet; the most touching part has still to come," said Pique Vinaigre. "As soon as Gringalet felt the cold and clammy paws of the great monkey, who caught him by the neck and by the head, he thought he would be swallowed up at once. He became almost delirious, and screamed and groaned in such a way as would have softened even a tiger. 'The spider of my dream! oh, my good God! the spider of my dream! Help! help little gold fly! Help! help!'

"'Will you hold your tongue? will you hold your tongue?' said Coupe-en-deux, kicking him violently, for he was afraid his screams might, perhaps, be heard. But, a moment afterward, there was no cause for fear; poor Gringalet neither cried nor struggled any more. Upon his knees, and pale as a sheet, he shut his eyes, and trembled in every limb, as if it had been the middle of January. During this time, the monkey beat him, pulled his hair and scratched his face; and, from time to time, the spiteful beast stopped, for a minute, to look at his master, precisely as though they understood each other. Coupe-en-deux laughed so heartily, so loudly, that, if Gringalet had shricked, his master's laugh would have completely drowned his cries. One would have said, that this encouraged Gargousse, who seemed more bent on hurting Gringalet than ever."

"Ah! that beastly monkey!" exclaimed the blue cap; "if I had hold you by the tail, I would have twirled you like a sling, and would have dashed your head against the pavement!"

"That rascally monkey was as wicked as a man."

"There are no men so wicked as all this!"

"Not so wicked?" replied Pique Vinaigre; "you forget Coupe-en-deux. Only think of him; I'll tell you what he did, afterward. He unfastened Gargousse's chain, which was a long one, from the end of the bed, and, for a moment, took the child, more dead than alive, out of the clutches of the monkey, and fastened him to the chain, so that Gringalet was at one end of it, and Gargousse at the other; both being fastened by the middle of the body, and having about three feet of it between them. There's an invention for you!"

"'Tis true, there are some men more savage than the most savage beasts."

"When Coupe-en-deux had accomplished this great feat, he said to his monkey, which appeared to understand all he said—and, truly, they were so well matched, they ought to have understood each other—'Attention! Gargousse; you have been led about, it is now your turn to lead Gringalet. He shall be your monkey. Get up, Gringalet, or I'll order Gargousse to seize upon you.' The poor child had again fallen upon his knees, and with uplifted hands, but was not able to speak, his teeth were chattering so loudly. 'Here! make him walk!' said Coupe-en-deux to his monkey: 'if he is unruly, do to him as I do;' and, at the same moment, gave the child a volley of stripes, with a cane, and then handed it to the monkey. You know these animals are, by their nature, great imitators; but Gargousse was more so than any other of his species. Well, then, he seized the cane in one paw, and laid it upon Gringalet, who was then compelled to get upon his feet, and, when upright, was not much taller than the monkey. Then Coupe-en-deux went out of his room, and, going down the stairs, called to Gargousse, who followed him, driving before him Gringalet, beating him all the time. They arrived, in this order, in the yard belonging to Coupe-en-deux's tenement. It was here he expected most to divert himself. He shut the door of the alley, and made signs to Gargousse to drive the poor boy round the yard. The monkey obeyed his master, and set to work, racing him round and round, and beating him with the cane, while Coupe-en-deux was holding his sides with laughter. Perhaps you'll think that this cruelty

ought to have sufficed; but, no, indeed, all this was nothing yet. Gringalet, up to this time, had got off with a few scratches, a good caning, and a most dreadful fright.

"Coupe-en-deux set to work to imagine something further. To make the monkey still more savage against the child, who was quite out of breath, he catches Gringalet by the hair, and makes believe to bite him, and throws him back to Gargousse, crying 'Seize him—seize him!' and then shows him a piece of sheep's heart, as if to tell him that would be his reward. Oh! then, my friends, 't was a most frightful spectacle. Imagine to yourselves, a great red monkey, his muzzle black as ink, grinding his teeth like a maniac, and leaping furiously, almost rabid, upon that poor unfortunate, who, not being able to defend himself, was knocked down by the first blow, and had turned himself upon his face, to prevent its being torn by this savage monster. Seeing this, Gargousse, whom his master kept urging on against the child, got upon his back, seized him by the neck and bit him till the blood came. 'Oh! the spider of my dream! the spider!' cried Gringalet, with a suffocated voice. Suddenly a voice was heard at the door—knock! knock! knock!"

"'T is the Ancient come at last!" cried several of the prisoners, joyfully; "he has come at last!"

"Yes, my friends, this time it was he! he called from the outside of the prison, 'Open the door! open the door! Coupe-en-deux, pretend not to be deaf, for I can see you through the key-hole!'

"The menagerie man being obliged to answer, went, grumbling to open the door for the Ancient, who, despite his fifty years, was still as solid as an oak, and with whom no one dared joke when he was angry. 'What do you want with me?' said Coupe-en-deux, opening the door half-way. 'I want to speak to you,' replied the Ancient, who almost forced his way into the little yard; and then seeing the monkey, still bent on biting Gringalet, he seized Gargousse by the neck, and was about to drag him from the child, and pitch him ten yards off, when he perceived that the child was chained to the monkey. Seeing this, he gave a terrible look at Coupe-en-deux, and cried out to him, 'Come, instantly, and unchain this unhappy child!'

"You will conceive the joy, the surprise of Gringalet, who, half dead with fear, all at once found himself, as 't were, by miracle, saved from the clutches of his enemy. He could not help remembering the golden fly of his dream, although the Ancient had nothing like a fly about him, nor anything approaching it."

"Come," said the keeper, taking a step once more toward the door, "as Gringalet is saved, I 'll go and eat my soup."

"Saved!" rejoined Pique Vinaigre, "saved! yes, certainly he was saved! but he is not yet at the end of his great tronbles; the poor Gringalet!"

"Not yet?" said some of the prisoners, with much interest.

"But, what more can happen to him?" said the keeper.

"Stay where you are, and you will hear," replied the story-teller.

"This devilish Pique Vinaigre makes one do just as he pleases," said the keeper; "faith, I 'll stop a little longer."

Squelette remained silent, but foamed with rage. Pique Vinaigre continued:

"Coupe-en-deux, who feared the Ancient as he feared the devil, although grumbling all the while, detached Gringalet from his chain; when that was done, the Ancient threw Gargousse high up into the air, and as he came down again, received him with a kick in the loins, which sent him rolling ten yards off; the monkey howled as if he had been burnt, gnashed his teeth, and nimbly scampered off and jumped upon the roof of a small shed, from whence he shook his fist at the Ancient. 'Why do you beat my monkey?' said Coupe-en-deux to the Ancient. 'You should rather ask, why I don't beat you—to make this poor child suffer in this way! You have got drunk very early this morning!' 'I am not more drunk than you are yourself. I was teaching my monkey a new trick. I want to give a scene, in which he and Gringalet are to appear together. I am attending to my business: what right have you to meddle with it?' 'I meddle in what concerns me! This morning, not seeing Gringalet pass before my door with the other children, I asked them where he was. They did not answer me, but looked confused. I know you well; I guessed that you were ill-using him; and I was not mistaken. Mark me well: every time I do not see Gringalet pass my door with the others, I shall be here on the instant, and you must show him to me, or otherwise I 'll knock you on the head.'

"'I shall do as I choose. You have no business to order me about,' replied Coupe-en-deux, irritated at this threat of being spyed upon. 'You shall knock nothing on the head, and if you do not take yourself off immediately, or if you dare to come back again——'

"Whack! whack! went the Ancient, interrupting Coupe-en-deux's, threatening with two boxes on the ear what would have stunned a rhinoceros. 'Take that: you deserve it for answering the Ancient of Little Poland so insolently."

"Two boxes on the ear! that was slim work," said the blue cap. "If I had been the Ancient, I would have given him a fatter mess of soup than that."

"And he would not have stolen it," added one of the prisoners.

"The Ancient could have eaten ten such as Coupe-en-deux," continued Pique Vinaigre. "The menagerie man was therefore obliged to pocket quietly the two boxes on the ear; but he was not the less enraged, and above all, at being beaten before Gringalet. He even, at that very moment, resolved to be revenged; and he conceived a plan which only a demon of wickedness, like himself, could have imagined. While ruminating on this idea, rubbing his ears all the while, to allay their tingling, the Ancient said to him, 'Recollect, that if you should continue to ill-treat this child, I will oblige you to decamp from Little Poland, you, and all your animals; and if you do not start when I command you, I will bring all the inhabitants about your ears. You know they detest you enough already. And in that case, they shall give you a procession, of which your back will long bear testimony, I 'll answer for it.'

"The rascally traitor, in order to execute his horrid scheme, instead of continuing angry with the Ancient, played the fawning dog, and said to him, in a coaxing way, 'Now, 'pon my faith, good Ancient, you were in the wrong to beat me, and to think that I was doing harm to Gringalet: quite the contrary. I tell you again, I was teaching the monkey a new trick; he is not good tempered; if he becomes obstinate, and if, in the scuffle, the boy has been bitten, I am sorry for it.'

"'Hem!' ejaculated the Ancient, looking askew at Coupe-en-deux; 'is what you tell me, really true? Besides, if you wanted to teach your monkey a trick, why did you fasten him to Gringalet?'

"'Because Gringalet is to play his part in the trick. I will tell you what I am going to do. I shall dress up Gargousse in a red coat, and hat and feathers, like a Swiss mountebank, selling quack medicine. I shall make Gringalet set down in a small chair, with a napkin round his neck; and the monkey with a large wooden razor, will appear to be shaving him.'

"The Ancient could not help laughing at this idea. 'Won't it be funny?' rejoined Coupe-en-deux, with a sardonic grin.

"''Tis really quite comical,' said the Ancient; 'and more so, as they say your devilish monkey is clever and cunning enough to do anything.'

"'I believe you! When he has seen me three or four times pretending to shave Gringalet, he will mimic me with his great wooden razor; but to do this, he must be accustomed to the boy, and therefore I have fastened them together.'

"'But why did you pitch upon Gringalet for this, rather than one of the other boys?'

"'Because he is the smallest of them all; and when he is sitting down, Gargousse is taller than he is. And besides, I intended giving half the profits to Gringalet.'

"'Oh! if that's the case,' said the Ancient, deceived by the hypocrisy of Coupe-en-deux, 'I am sorry for the whack I gave you. You must, therefore, consider them as payment in advance for the next fault you may commit.'

"During the time that his master was speaking to the Ancient, Gringalet, hardly daring to breathe, trembled like a leaf, and would have given the world had he dared to throw himself at the Ancient's feet, to entreat him to take him away with him. But his courage failed him, and he began to despair again, saying to himself, 'I shall be like the poor fly in my dream: the spider will devour me. I was wrong when I believed that the gold fly would save me.'

"'Come, my boy, take courage. As father Coupe-en-deux intends to give you half what you receive, you ought to get accustomed to the monkey. Bah! bah! you 'll soon get used to him; and if you earn plenty of money, you will have nothing to complain of.'

"'He complain! Have you anything to complain of!' said Coupe-en-deux to Gringalet, looking at him sideways, with such a horrible expression, that the poor boy wished himself under ground a hundred feet. 'No, no, master,' replied he, stammering.

"'You see clearly, Ancient,' said Coupe-en-deux, 'he has never had reason to complain. I wish only for his good, after all. If Gargousse has scratched him the first time, he will never do it again, I promise you; I will look to that.'

"'That's all right; and in this way, you will both be satisfied.'

"'And Gringalet better than I shall. Won't this satisfy you?'

"'Yes, yes, my master,' said the boy, still trembling.

"'And to console you for your scratches, you shall have your share in a good breakfast which the Ancient is going to send me —a dish of cutlets, with pickled cucumbers, four bottles of wine, and a gallon of brandy.'

"'At your service, Coupe-en-deux: my cellar and my kitchen shine for all the world.'

"At the bottom, the Ancient was a good man; but he was not over bright, and he liked to sell his wine, and his cookery too. The rascally Coupe-en-deux well knew this. You see, that he managed to send him off quite satisfied, by ordering something to eat and drink, and had quite pacified him as to Gringalet.

"Once more, then, had the poor boy fallen into the power of his wretched master. As soon as the Ancient had turned his back, Coupe-en-deux showed the little sufferer the staircase, and ordered him quickly to regain his garret. There was no occasion to tell him twice, for he was too terrified to hesitate.

"'Oh! my good God! I am lost!' cried he, throwing himself upon the straw beside his tortoise, and weeping bitterly. He had been there a good hour, sobbing and crying, when he heard the gruff voice of his master, calling him. What increased the fear of Gringalet was, that he thought his master's voice sounded otherwise than usual.

"'Will you come down instantly?' cried Coupe-en-deux, swearing the most dreadful oaths.

"The boy hastened to get down the ladder. He had hardly got to the bottom, when his master, who staggered at every step; for Coupe-en-deux had drank so much, that he was as drunk as a pig, and could hardly stand upon his legs; his body rolled, first on one side, then on the other; and he looked at Gringalet with such fierce eyes—so ferociously! but did not say a word; his tongue, as the saying is, was too thick to speak. The child had never been so frightened.

"Gargousse was chained to the foot of the bed.

"In the middle of the room was a chair with a cord hanging over the back of it.

"'S-s-sit down there,' continued Pique Vinaigre, imitating until the end of the story the stammerings of a drunken man, whenever he repeated what Coupe-en-deux had said.

"Gringalet sat down trembling; then Coupe-en-deux wound the great cord round him, and tied him to the chair, and not very easily; for although he still retained his *sight* and some slight perceptions of what he was about, you will easily conceive that he made his knots double. At last, Gringalet was firmly tied into the chair. 'Oh! good heaven!' murmured he, 'nobody will come to deliver me this time.' Poor little fellow! he was right; nobody could come, as you will see. The Ancient had gone away perfectly tranquillized; Coupe-en-deux had double locked and bolted the door of the yard; nobody could, therefore, come to the assistance of Gringalet."

The prisoners burst out into various exclamations, so much had their feelings been aroused by the story. One said, "Oh! poor Gringalet; this time you are lost indeed." Others cried out, "Poor little fellow!" "What a pity!" "If twenty sous would save him, I would give it!" "And I too!" "That miserable wretch, Coupe-en-deux!" "What can he be going to do to him?"

Pique Vinaigre went on: "When Gringalet was securely fastened into his chair, his master said to him, 'Ah! you young rascal!—you, you were the cause—that, that I-I was b-b-beaten by the An-An-Ancient—you-you-you are go-going to die f-f-for it.' And he drew from his pocket a large razor, which had been newly sharpened, opened it, and then with one hand catching Gringalet by the hair——"

A murmur of indignation and of horror was uttered by nearly all the prisoners, which interrupted, for a moment, Pique Vinaigre, who continued:

"On seeing the razor, the boy cried out, 'Pardon, master! pardon! Do not kill me!' 'Cry, cry away! gro-groan as you will! you will not cry long,' said Coupe-en-deux. 'Help! help! gold-fly!' screamed poor Gringalet, almost beside himself; and thinking of the dream which had left such an impression upon him. 'Here is the spider going to kill me!' 'Ha! ha! you ca-call me spi-spider, do you?' said Coupe-en-deux; 'for that, and oth-other th-things, you, shall d-die—but—no-not by my hand—be-because—the-thing—and th-then they—might guil-guillotine me. I will s-say—and I c-can prove it—was the monkey—I—je-just now pre-pre-prepared the thing—but—n-no matter,' said Coupe-en-deux, with difficulty keeping on his legs. Then calling his monkey, who, having drawn as close to his master and Gringalet as his chain would allow him, and grinding his teeth, was looking first at one and then at the other: 'Here, Gargousse,' said Coupe-en-deux, showing the monkey the razor, and pointing to Gringalet, 'you will do so to him—d ye see?' And he passed the back of the razor several times over Gringalet's throat. The devilish monkey was such a mimic, so spiteful and so cunning, that he understood what his master meant; and, as if to show him that he did, he took hold of his own chin with his right paw, threw back his head, and made a sign as if cutting his own throat.

"'Tha-that's it, Ga-ga-gargousse! you've hit it,' said Coupe-en-deux, stammering more than ever, and half-shutting his eyes. He then staggered so violently, that he was near falling, with Gringalet, chair and all. 'Ye-yes, that's it; I wi-will unchain you, an—and you will cut his win-wind-pipe, wo-won't you, Ga-ga-gargousse?' The monkey screamed and grinned, as if to say yes, and put out his paw to take the razor which Coupe-en-deux held out to him.

"'Help! gold-fly! help!' groaned Gringalet, with a dying voice, certain that he was now at his last hour; for, alas! he called the gold-fly to his assistance, without expecting it, or hoping it; but he said it as a drowning man would say, 'My God! my God!' Well, he was wrong to doubt it, for, would you believe it? at that very moment, Gringalet saw, flying in, through the open window, one of those little flies, all green and gold, of which there are so many. One would have said it was a spark of fire flying about; and, just at the very instant when Coupe-en-deux had given the razor to the monkey, the gold-fly darted straight into the right eye of the cruel ruffian. A fly in one's eye is no great thing; but, at the moment, you well know, it feels as sharp as a needle, and therefore Coupe-en-deux, who could scarcely stand, clapped one hand to his eye so suddenly, and with so violent a movement, that he staggered, tripped over something on the floor, and fell at full length upon the ground, and rolled over to the foot of the bed, to which Gargousse was chained.

"'Thanks, gold-fly! thanks! thou hast saved me!' exclaimed Gringalet; for, although sitting down, and fastened to his chair, he had seen it all."

"That's true, i'faith; the gold-fly prevented him from having his throat cut!" cried the prisoners, with great glee.

"Long life to the gold-fly!" cried blue-cap.

"Long life to the gold-fly!" shouted several of the prisoners.

"Long life to Pique Vinaigre and his stories!" exclaimed another.

"Wait a little," rejoined the story-teller; "the grandest and most terrible part of the story is yet to come.

"Coupe-en-deux had fallen to the ground, like so much lead, he was so drunk; so drunk, that he lay as motionless as a log; he was really dead-drunk, and altogether senseless: but, in falling, he had almost crushed Gargousse, and had very nearly broken one of his hind-legs. You know how spiteful, revengeful and malicious, this horrid monkey was. He still held the razor, which his master had given him to cut Gringalet's throat. What does my rascal of a monkey do, when he perceives his master stretched upon his back, as motionless as a drowned carp, and well within his reach? Why, he jumps upon him, squats down upon his chest, with one of his paws stretches the skin of his neck, and with the other—crack! he cuts his throat as neatly as a whistle, as he had been taught, by Coupe-en-deux, to do to Gringalet."

"Bravo!"

"Well done, monkey!"

"Hurrah for Gargousse!" enthusiastically cried the prisoners.

"Long life to the little gold-fly!"

"Long life to Gringalet!"

"Long life to Gargousse!"

"Well, my good friends," said Pique Vinaigre, enchanted at the applause his story had received; "as you have shouted now, so did the inhabitants of all Little Poland, an hour after these events had taken place."

"How was that! What for?"

"I told you that Coupe-en-deux, in order to execute his murderous plan quite at his ease, had well secured his door. At dusk, then, as was customary, the boys returned home with their animals, arriving there one after the other. The first that came knocked at the door; no one answered. They remained there some time; at last they were all assembled, and knocked more loudly than before; not a soul appeared. One of them went and told the Ancient how long they had been knocking, and that their master did not let them in. 'The devil!' said the Ancient, 'I sent the wine and brandy that he ordered, and the rascal must be as drunk as any Englishman. We must break open the door, for these poor boys can't remain all the night in the street.'

"The door was broken open with sledge-hammers; they entered; they went up stairs; they ran into the room; and what did they see there? Gargouesse chained, and squatting down upon his master's body, playing with the razor. Poor Gringalet,

fortunately out of the reach of the monkey's chain, was still sitting and fastened to the chair, not daring to look on the dead body of Coupe-en-deux, and gazing at—guess what?—the little gold-fly; which, after having buzzed around the poor little boy, as 't were to congratulate him on his escape, had alighted on one of his small hands. Gringalet related to the Ancient, and to the crowd that followed him, all that had taken place; they all declared that it appeared a miracle from heaven; and the Ancient himself cried out: 'A triumphal procession for Gringalet! A triumphal procession for Gargousse, who killed that murderous monster Coupe-en-deux! He 'ot others, in his turn he has had his throat cut.'

"'Yes! yes!' shouted the crowd, for the menagerie man was detested by everybody. 'A triumphal procession for Gargousse; a triumphal procession for Gringalet!'

"It was now dark; they lighted torches of straw; they strapped Gargousse upon a bench, which four lads carried upon their shoulders. The spiteful monkey did not appear to take much pleasure in it, but he assumed some airs of triumph, by showing his teeth to the crowd. After the monkey marched the Ancient, carrying Gringalet in his arms; all his companions each carrying his animal, surrounded the good Ancient; some played the hurdy-gurdy, some the organ, and a few Auvergnese charcoal-sellers played upon their bagpipes. It would be difficult to describe the joy they testified, the racket that they made. It was in fact a perfect fête. After the musicians, came all the inhabitants of Little Poland, men, women, and children, all of them bearing torches of straw, and shouting like mad people, 'Long life to Gringalet!' The procession, in this order, marched round and round the house of Coupe-en-deux. It was a curious spectacle, to see those old miserable houses, and all those faces, lighted up by the red glare of those straw torches, which flamed so fitfully. As to Gringalet, the first thing that he did, when once at liberty, was to put his little gold-fly into a paper box, and all the time of his triumphal procession, he kept on repeating, 'Little flies, I did well to prevent the spiders from devouring you——'"

The end of Pique Vinaigre's story was interrupted, by some one calling from outside the room, "Come, father Rousselle, and eat your soup. In ten minutes it will be four o'clock."

"Well, the story is just finished. I will go. Thank you, my good fellow. You have amused me capitally, I assure you, and you may feel proud of it," said the keeper to Pique Vinaigre, as he moved toward the door. He then stopped, and turning round to the prisoners, said: "But now I expect you will be orderly."

"We are going to hear the end of the story," said Squelette, panting with restrained rage. He then whispered to the big cripple, "Go to the door, follow the keeper with your eyes, till he is out of the yard; then cry, '*Gargousse!*' and the informer is dead."

"I 'll do so," said the big cripple; and he went to the door to look after the keeper.

"I was telling you, then," continued Pique Vinaigre, "that Gringalet, during the whole time of his triumphal procession, was saying to himself, 'Little flies, I——'"

"Gargousse!" shouted the big cripple, turning round. He had just seen the keeper leaving the yard.

"Have at you, Gringalet! I will be your spider," instantly exclaimed Squelette, throwing himself so precipitately, and with so much force, upon Germain that the latter could neither make a movement to defend himself, or utter even a cry. His voice expired under the terrible pressure of the long and iron fingers of the skeleton.

CHAPTER XXIX..... AN UNKNOWN FRIEND.

"If you are the spider, I will be the gold-fly, unlucky skeleton!" exclaimed a voice, at the moment when Germain, surprised by the violent and sudden attack of his implacable enemy, was thrown back on his bench, delivered to the fury of the ruffian; who, with one knee on his chest, had seized him by the throat. "Yes! I will be the fly, and a famous fly, too!" reiterated the man in the blue cap, whom we have already mentioned; then, with a furious bound, he threw down three or four of the prisoners, who were between him and Germain, and darting at Squelette, administered such a shower of blows upon his head and between his eyes, and with such frightful rapidity, that they sounded like the loud beating of a hammer upon an anvil. The man in the blue cap, who was no other than Chourineur himself, while redoubling the velocity of his *hammering* upon the head of Squelette, added, "This is the shower of blows which Mr. Rodolphe planted on my turnip! I have kept them till now."

At this unexpected aggression, the prisoners remained thunderstruck, and without taking part either for or against Chourineur. Many among them, still under the salutary influence of Pique Vinaigre's story, were even well satisfied with this incident, which might perhaps save Germain.

Squelette, who at first was stunned, and staggering like an ox under the blows of the butcher's heavy sledge, mechanically stretched out both his hands before him, to ward off the blows his enemy was giving him. This released Germain from the death-like grip of the skeleton, and he was enabled to raise up a little.

"What is the matter? who is he so mad against this ruffian?" cried the big cripple; and rushing behind Chourineur, he tried to seize hold of both his arms, while the latter was making violent efforts to keep Squelette down upon the bench. The defender of Germain replied to the attack of the big cripple by so violent a kick, that it sent him rolling to the extremity of the circle formed by the prisoners. Germain, whose face was of a livid and bluish paleness, was kneeling, almost choked, beside the bench, and did not appear to have any consciousness of what was passing around him. The strangling had been so violent and so painful, that he could scarcely breathe.

The stunning effect of the first blows having subsided, Squelette, by a desperate effort, succeeded in releasing himself from Chourineur, and got upon his legs. Panting with rage and hate, his appearance was absolutely frightful. His cadaverous face streamed with blood; his upper lip was curled like that of an enraged wolf, and showed both rows of teeth set firmly against each other. He at last cried out, in a voice palpitating with fury and fatigue—for his struggle with Chourineur had been most violent:

"Dash him to pieces!—that ruffian there! you set of cowards, to allow me to be so treacherously attacked! If not, the informer will escape us."

During this sort of truce, Chourineur, snatching up Germain, who was half-fainting, had manœuvred skilfully enough to gradually get near the angle of a wall, where he placed his charge. Profiting by this excellent position for acting on the defence, Chourineur could, without fearing an attack from the rear, hold out some time against the prisoners, to whom the courage and herculean strength he had just displayed, inspired much respect.

Pique Vinaigre, being frightened, disappeared during the tumult, without any one noticing his absence.

Observing the hesitation of the greater number of the prisoners, Squelette cried out, "Follow me, then—let us smash them both—the big one and the little one."

"Take care," replied Chourineur, preparing himself for the combat, both fists advanced and squared before his broad and manly chest. "Take care of yourself, Squelette! If you want to play the Coupe-en-deux again, I 'll play Gargousse and slit your wesand for you!"

"Fall upon him then!" cried the big cripple, getting up; "why does this furious fellow defend the informer? Death to the informer, and to him too! If he defend him, he 's a traitor!"

"Yes! yes!"

"Death to the informer!"

"Yes, death to the traitor who defends him!"

Such were the shouts of the most hardened of the prisoners. Another party, more tender-hearted, cried out:

"No! let him be heard first!"

"Let him explain himself!"

"A man is not to be killed without being heard!"

"And defenceless, too!"

"We must be real Coupe-en-deux to do it!"

"So much the better!" replied the big cripple and the partisans of the skeleton.

"Nothing is too bad for an informer!"

"Death to him!"

"Let us fall upon them!"

"Let us support Squelette!"

"Yes, yes! rough music to the blue cap!"

"No! let us support the blue cap—rough music to the skeleton!" replied Chourineur's party.

"No! down with the blue cap!"

"Down with the skeleton!"

"Bravo! my boys!" cried Chourineur, addressing those who had sided with him—"you have hearts—you would not massacre a man, half dead already! They are cowards who would do so! To Squelette, it can make no difference—he is condemned beforehand—he knows what fate he 'll have, and it is that which makes him push you on. But, if you help to kill Germain, you will be sorely pinched. Besides, I have something to propose: Squelette wants to finish this young man—well! let him come and take him from me, if he has the pluck to do it!—we 'll fight it out between ourselves—we will have a tousel, and you

shall see who 's the best man. But he dares not—he is like Coupe-en-deux, strong with the weak!"

Chourineur's vigor, his energy, and his commanding countenance, produced a powerful effect upon the prisoners, a good number of whom arrayed themselves on his side, and surrounded Germain. Squelette's party arranged themselves round him. A bloody conflict was about commencing, when, all at once, they heard the sounding and measured footsteps of a picquet of infantry, always on guard in the prison. Pique Vinaigre, taking advantage of the confusion that prevailed, had slipped into the yard, run to the wicket of the lodge, and warned the keepers of what was going on. The arrival of the soldiers brought this scene to a conclusion.

Germain, Squelette, and Chourineur, were taken before the director of the prison; the first to lodge his complaint, the two others to answer an accusation of having caused a disturbance in the prison. The terror and the sufferings of Germain had been so poignant, he was so overcome by them, that he was obliged to have the assistance of two persons, to reach a room next to the director's, where they conducted him. Reaching this, he fainted. His throat was so excoriated, that on it could be traced the impression of the iron fingers of the skeleton. A few moments more, and Rigolette's affianced husband would have been strangled.

The keeper who had the charge of the parlor, and whom we have said had always felt much interest in Germain, was the first to render him assistance. When the latter came to himself, when reflection had succeeded to the turmoil of violent and terrible emotions, which had hardly left him the use of reason, his first thought was of his deliverer. "Thank you, for your kindness, sir," said he to the keeper; "had it not been for that courageous man, I should have been lost."

"How do you feel, now?"

"Better. Oh! all that has just occurred, seems to me like a horrid dream!"

"Keep yourself quiet."

"And where is he who saved me?"

"In the director's office; he is relating to him how the attack began. It appears that, without his aid——"

"I should have been murdered. Oh! pray tell me his name, who is he?"

"I do not know; he is surnamed Chourineur. He has been at the galleys."

"The crime which now brings him here is, perhaps, not a very grave one?"

"Very grave? a robbery, with breaking into a house at night, and in an inhabited house!" said the keeper. "He will most likely have the same dose as Pique Vinaigre—fifteen or twenty years in the galleys and the pillory, seeing it is not his first offence."

Germain shuddered: he would rather have been bound by ties of gratitude to a less criminal man. "Oh! this is dreadful!" he exclaimed; "and yet this man, without even knowing me, took upon him to defend me with so much courage and generosity!"

"It so happens, that now and then there is good feeling among these people. The most important part of it is, that you are saved. To-morrow you will have your cell, *à la pistole*, and for to-night you'll sleep in the infirmary, by order of the director. So cheer up, sir! the bad times are past. When your pretty little visitor shall come again to see you, you can comfort her; for when once you get into your cell, you have nothing more to fear. Only, I think 't would be as well not to mention to her anything about the scene which has just taken place: she would become ill from fright."

"Oh! certainly, I should not think of saying a word to her about it. But I much wish to thank my good deliverer: as guilty as he may be in the eyes of the law, yet I owe my life to him."

"Stay; I hear him just coming out of the room of the director, who is now going to examine Squelette. I shall have to take them both back again soon, Squelette to the black-hole, and Chourineur to the Lion's Den. He will, moreover, be somewhat rewarded for what he has done for you; for as he is a powerful and resolute fellow—as a man must be to take the lead among these outlaws—he will propably succeed the skeleton as provost over them."

Chourineur, having crossed a small passage into which the director's room opened, came into the room where Germain was.

"Wait for me here," said the keeper to Chourineur, "I will go and see what the director decides on doing with Squelette, and I will come back to fetch you. Here is our young man quite himself again; he wishes to thank you, and he has good reason; for without you, he would have been completely done for." The keeper left the room.

The countenance of Chourineur was radiant with happiness; he joyfully drew near to Germain. "Thunder!" exclaimed he, "but I am glad to have saved you!" and holding out his hand to Germain.

The latter, from a feeling of involuntary repugnance, drew back a little, instead of taking the hand which Chourineur held out to him; and then remembering, that after all, he owed his life to this man, he wished to make amends for this first feeling of reluctance. But Chourineur had perceived it; a sudden gloom passed over his expressive features, and, in his turn, drawing back from Germain, he said, with bitter feeling: "Ah! I had forgot—I beg your pardon, sir!"

"No; it is I who ought to ask your pardon. Am I not a prisoner like yourself? I ought only to think of the great service you have rendered me; you saved my life. Your hand, sir. Nay, I beg you—I entreat—give me your hand."

"I thank you; but now 't is useless—the first impulse is everything. Had you at once given me a shake of the hand, it would have pleased me; but, when I reflect upon it, it is I who ought no longer to wish for it: not that I am a prisoner like yourself; but," added he, with a mournful look and hesitating; "because, before I came here, I was——"

"The keeper told me all," replied Germain, interrupting him; "but you have not less saved my life."

"I only did my duty, and what pleased me; for I know who you are, Mr. Germain."

"You know me!"

"A little, nephew, I should say, if I were your uncle," said Chourineur, falling back into his usual careless tone—"and you would be very wrong to imagine that my arrival at La Force has been the effect of chance. If I had not known you, I should not be in prison."

Germain looked at Chourineur with profound surprise. "What then, is it because you know me——?"

"That I am here a prisoner in La Force."

"I would wish to believe you, but——"

"You do not believe me?"

"I mean to say that 't is impossible for me to understand how I could have anything to do with your imprisonment."

"Anything to do? you have everything to do with it."

"I should have been so unfortunate."

"Unfortunate! quite the contrary; it is I who am indebted to you, and furiously too."

"To me! indebted to me!"

"Yes, and a thumping candle, too,* for having procured me the advantage of making a trip to La Force."

"Really," replied Germain, passing his hand across his forehead, "I do not know whether the dreadful shock I received just now has disturbed my reason; but it is impossible to understand you. The keeper has just told me that you were brought here as being accused of——" Germain hesitated.

"Of robbery, i' faith; why do you hesitate?—of robbery, and breaking into a house, and climbing up into it; and at night, above all—all sails shaking, eh?" cried Chourineur, bursting into a loud laugh. "There's not one tittle wanting—it is pretty knotty; my robbery has all the necessary condiments to make it spicy, as they say."

Germain was painfully moved by the hardened manner in which Chourineur spoke of his crimes, and could not avoid saying:

"How can you, who are so generous and brave, speak in this manner! Do you not know to what a terrible punishment you have exposed yourself?"

"Twenty years in the galleys and the pillory. Am I not a great scoundrel to bear it so coolly? But what can I do? When we are once in it—and yet it is all for your sake, Mr. Germain," said Chourineur, heaving a deep sigh, with an affectation of contrition. "It is you who are the cause of my disgrace."

"When you explain yourself more clearly, I shall understand you. Joke as much as you please. My gratitude for the services which you have rendered me, will not diminish," said Germain, sadly.

"Pardon me, Mr. Germain," replied Chourineur, in a serious tone. "You do not like to hear me talk in this manner. I will speak so no more. I must change my conversation, and I shall perhaps oblige you to stretch out your hand."

"I have no doubt of it, for in spite of the crime of which you are accused, and of which you accuse yourself, everything about you bespeaks courage and frankness. I am sure that you are

* In Catholic countries, when any good luck happens to a man, he places a lighted candle before the image of his patron saint—large or small, according to the importan of the benefit received.

unjustly suspected. Circumstantial evidence perhaps endangers you?"

"As for that, you are much mistaken, Mr. Germain," said Chourineur, in such a sober voice, and with such an accent of sincerity, that Germain was compelled to believe him.

"Upon the honor of a man, and as true as that I have a protector—" Chourineur removed his cap from his head in reverence—"who is to me what God is to the holy priest, I stole in the night, by breaking open a shutter. I was arrested in the act, having in my possession all that I had just stolen."

"But want, hunger, and misery, must have driven you to the commission of such a crime?"

"Hunger! I had a hundred and twenty francs when I was arrested; the remainder of a bill of a thousand francs, and besides, the protector of whom I speak, and who is ignorant that I am here, will never suffer me to want anything; but since I have spoken to you of my protector, you must think that I am growing serious; for he is a man that one would kneel down before. I tell you that the shower of fisticuffs that pattered upon the skeleton is one of my protector's ways, which I copied from nature, and it was on his account that the idea of the theft came into my mind. And if you are here safe, instead of being strangled by Squelette, it is all owing to him."

"But who is this protector?"

"He is yours also."

"Mine!"

"Yes; Mr. Rodolphe protects you. When I say Mr., I should say 'my lord,' for he is a prince, at least; but I have been in the habit of calling him Mr. Rodolphe, and he allows me to do it."

"You must be mistaken," said Germain, more and more surprised. "I am not acquainted with the Prince."

"That may be, but he knows you, although you do n't suspect it. It is very possible, for that is his way. He learns that an honest man is in trouble—bang! the honest man is relieved, unknown—unseen; for he keeps dark. Good showers down upon him from the clouds, like a tile upon one's head. So be patient; one of these days your tile will come."

"In truth, what you tell me perfectly confounds me."

"You will have many other things to learn. To return to my protector: after a service which he pretended I had rendered to him, he procured for me a superb situation! there is no need of my telling you what it was, for it would take too much time. In short, he sent me to Marseilles to embark for Algeria, and get my superb situation. I started from Paris, happy as a lord. Good! but soon a change takes place. Suppose we say that I started by a fine sunshine: well, the next day the weather becomes cloudy; the day after it becomes quite dark: and so on, more and more dark the farther I go, until it finally becomes as black as the devil. Do you understand?"

"Not exactly."

"Did you ever have a dog?"

"What a singular question!"

"Did you ever have a dog that loved you much, and finally got lost?"

"No."

"Then I will tell you simply, that when I was out of sight of Mr. Rodolphe, I was uneasy, stupid, and frightened, like a dog who has lost his master! it was silly, but the dogs also are silly; but that does n't keep them from being attached, and remembering the good morsels, as well as the blows which are given to them. And Mr. Rodolphe had given me more than good morsels: for, look you! to me Mr. Rodolphe is worth more than all the world besides. He has made an honest man out of a wild, harum-scarum, good-for-nothing! Those two words which he uttered, are like magic."

"What did he say to you?"

"He told me that I had not lost my heart and my honor, although I had been to the bagnio; not for stealing it is true—for thank the Lord, I never did that—but for what is worse, perhaps, for having killed. Yes," said Chourineur, in a gloomy voice; "yes; killed in a moment of passion! Because, having been brought up like a brute, abandoned, without father or mother, on the pavement of Paris, I knew neither God nor the devil, good nor evil, strong nor weak. At times, blood would rush to my eyes; everything I saw was red; and if I had a knife in my hand, I stabbed and stabbed; I was like a perfect wolf; I saw no one but villains and bandits; and I did n't wear a crape on my hat for them either. I lived in the mud, and didn't know that I was in it; but when Mr. Rodolphe told me, that in spite of the contempt of the world and misery, I had preferred to work, instead of stealing, like others, which showed that I had still a heart and honor—thunder! those two words had the same effect upon me, as if they had caught me by the hair and raised me a thousand feet in the air, above the vermin with whom I associated. I said at once, 'Thank you, I don't wish for any more;' and my heart beat, not with anger. And I swore that I would always have that honor, of which Mr. Rodolphe spoke. You see, Mr. Germain, in what manner Mr. Rodolphe, by assuring me that I was not as bad as I thought myself, encouraged me; and thanks to him, I am better than I was."

Upon hearing this language, Germain was more completely amazed at the theft of which Chourineur accused himself.

CHAPTER XXX..... THE DELIVERANCE.

"No," thought Germain, "it is impossible; the man who was so meliorated by the assurance that he had not lost his honor or his heart, cannot have committed the theft, of which he speaks with so much indifference."

Chourineur continued, without noticing Germain's astonishment: "The reason, finally, which attaches me to Mr. Rodolphe, like a dog to his master, is that he has elevated me in my own eyes. Before I knew him, I never felt anything deeper than the skin; but he touched me inside. When I was separated from him, I felt like a body without a soul. As I went further, I said to myself, 'He passes such a singular life, and mingles with such great villains, as I know by experience, that he risks his skin twenty times per day, and in one of those chances I might be his dog, and defend my master, for I have good teeth. But, on the other hand, he told me, 'Be useful to others, my boy; you must go where you can be of some service.' I had a great mind to reply to him, 'I can be useful to no one else but yourself, Mr. Rodolphe;' but I dare not. He said to me 'Go,' and I went, and I staid as long as I could. But, thunder! when I had to mount the ship, and put the sea between me and Mr. Rodolphe, without the hope of ever seeing him again, I had n't the courage to do it. He had written to his correspondent to give me as much money as I could carry, when I was ready to sail. I went to see the gentleman, and said to him, 'It is impossible for me to go to sea, I like the shore the best; give me enough to go on foot to Paris, for I have good legs, and wish to return. I can't stand it any longer. Mr. Rodolphe may be angry, and refuse to see me, but I shall be in the same place with him; and, if he leads the same sort of life, sooner or later I shall be able to place myself between a knife and him. I can't go away so far from him; something draws me to the place where he is.' He gave me enough to pay my journey, and I arrived in Paris. I am not a man to shrink before many things, but a fear seized me; how should I excuse myself to Mr. Rodolphe, for returning without his permission? Pshaw! he wo n't eat me up; never mind the result. I will go and see his friend, a tall, large, bald man, a cream of a man, also. When Mr. Murph came in, I said to myself, 'My fate will now be decided.' I felt my throat dry and my heart beat. I expected a good lecture, but not so; the worthy man received me as if we had separated the day before, and told me that Mr. Rodolphe, far from being angry, wished to see me immediately. He led me to my protector. Thunder! when I found myself face to face with him,—he who has such a good countenance and kind heart; he who is terrible as a lion, and mild as a child; he who is a prince, and wore a blouse like mine, in order to have the chance, which I bless, of giving me a shower of fisticuffs, so that I saw nothing but fire;—in thinking of all these qualities which he possessed, I felt all topsy-turvy, and I wept like a child. Instead of laughing at it—only imagine what a looking face mine is, when I weep—Mr. Rodolphe said to me, soberly, 'You have, then, come back, my boy?' 'Yes, Mr. Rodolphe; pardon me, if I was wrong; but I could n't stand it any longer. Have a kennel built for me, in the corner of your yard; give me my bread, or let me earn it here, is all that I ask of you; and don't be angry with me for having returned.'

"'Far from being angry, my boy, I am rejoiced; for you come in time to render me a service.'

"'I! Mr. Rodolphe? can it be possible! there must be something above, as you say, or how could I explain my arrival on the very day you wished me? what can I do for you, Mr. Rodolphe? Shall I take a dive from the top of the tower of Notre-Dame?'

"'Less than that, my boy; an honest and excellent young man, in whom I take as much interest as if he were my son, is unjustly accused of theft, and confined in La Force; his name is Germain; he is of a mild and gentle disposition. The wretches with whom he is imprisoned, have an aversion to him, and he may be in great danger. You, who are, unfortunately, acquainted with prison life, and a great multitude of prisoners; could you not, in case that some of your old friends were in La Force;—

could you not see them, and by promising money, which shall be paid to them, engage them to protect that unhappy young man ?'"

"But, who is this generous and unknown friend, that takes so much interest in me ?" said Germain, with increasing surprise.

"'You will, perhaps, know him; as for me, I must not tell. To return to my conversation with Mr. Rodolphe: after he had spoken to me, I had such a funny idea that I could not help laughing in his presence.

"'What is the matter with you, my boy ?' said he to me.

"'Why, Mr. Rodolphe, I laugh because I am happy, and have it in my power to put your Mr. Germain under a protection, which will defend him from the ill-treatment of the prisoners; and to provide him with a friend that will protect him thoroughly; for if the young man is once under the wing of the chap to whom I allude, there will not be one who will dare look him in the face !' 'Very well, my boy; it is probably one of your old companions !' 'Just so, Mr. Rodolphe; he entered La Force a few days since. I heard of it on my arrival, but we must have some money !' 'How much is wanted ?' 'A bill for a thousand francs !' 'Here it is !' 'Thank you, Mr. Rodolphe, you shall hear from me within two days; your servant.' Thunder ! the king was not my master. It was in my power to render service to Mr. Rodolphe on your account: that was famous !"

"I begin to understand, or rather, I tremble to understand," said Germain. "Is such devotion possible ? You have, perhaps, committed a robbery, to defend me here;—'t would be the sorrow of my life, if such was the fact !"

"Wait a moment ! Mr. Rodolphe had said to me, 'You have a heart and honor !' These were the words, you see, which are my law; and he can tell me so again, for if I am no better than I was before, at least, I am no worse."

"But the robbery ! the robbery ! if you did not commit it, how do you happen to be here ?"

"Hear me, and listen to a farce: With my thousand francs, I purchased a black periwig; I shaved off my whiskers, I put on blue spectacles, I stuffed a pillow in my back, to make a hump for myself, and I began to look for a room upon the lower floor in a retired street. I found the place which I wanted, in the rue de Provence, and I paid in advance, under the name of Mr. Gregory. The next day I went to the Temple to buy furniture for the two rooms, always having on my black periwig, my hump, and my blue spectacles, so that I should be well known; I sent my effects to the rue Provence, and six silver spoons and forks, which I bought on the boulevard Saint Denis, all the time disguised with the hump. I returned, to put everything in order in my domicile; I told the porter that I should not lodge there for two days, and I carried away my key. The windows of the two rooms were fastened by strong shutters, and before I went away I unfastened one upon the inside. When the night came on, I took off my periwig, my spectacles and the hump, in which I had made my purchases, and hired my rooms. I put this disguise in a trunk which I sent to the address of Mr. Murph, the friend of Mr. Rodolphe, intreating him to take care of the traps; I bought the blouse and blue cap, and a crowbar, two feet long, and at one o'clock in the morning, I went to hang about my lodgings in the rue de Provence, waiting until the moment the patrol should pass, to commence my robbery and burglary, in order to be arrested;" and Chourineur could not restrain a hearty laugh.

"I understand," exclaimed Germain.

"You will see if I was not in bad luck. No patrol passed: I might have robbed myself twenty times, with perfect ease. Finally, at about two o'clock in the morning, I heard footsteps; the guard was approaching. I opened the shutter, broke the window, so as to make a devil of a noise, jumped into the room, caught hold of the box of spoons and forks, and a few clothes. The patrol fortunately heard the rattle of the glass; for just as I was coming out of the window, I was seized by the guards, who had hastened their steps on hearing the noise of the broken glass. They rapped at the door; the porter opened it, and they went after the commissaire. When he arrived, the porter told him, that the two rooms which were robbed had been hired the day before by a hunchback gentleman with black hair, and wearing blue glasses, and whose name was Gregory. I had this tow hair which you see on me; I kept my eye open, like a rabbit in his burrow; I was as erect as a Russian presenting arms: therefore, I could not be mistaken for the hunchback with blue glasses and black hair. I confessed everything, and was arrested and taken to the depot, and from there here; and I arrived just in time to pull from the claws of Squelette, the young man respecting whom Mr. Rodolphe had said, 'I am as much interested as if he were my own son.'"

"How much I am indebted for your devoted kindness !" exclaimed Germain.

"It is not to me, but to Mr. Rodolphe, that you owe your deliverance."

"But what is the reason of his interest in me ?"

"Perhaps he will inform you, perhaps not; for he often contents himself with doing good, and if you have the boldness to ask him the reason, he will not hesitate to reply, 'Mind your own business.'"

"Does Mr. Rodolphe know that you are here ?"

"I was not such a fool as to tell him my plan, for he probably would not have allowed me to play the joke; and, without bragging, I think that it is a famous one."

"But how many risks you run ?"

"What did I risk ? I might have been taken to some other prison, to be sure; but I relied on the influence of Mr. Rodolphe, to get my prison changed and join you. A lord, like himself, can do anything; once caught, he would have been willing that I should be of use to you."

"But when your trial comes on ?"

"I will ask Mr. Murph to send me the trunk. I will put on before the judge, my black periwig, blue glasses, and hump. I return again to Mr. Gregory, for the benefit of the porter who hired the room to me, and for the merchants who sold the articles to me;—so much for the robbed man. If they wish to see the thief again, I will change my clothes, and it will be plain as daylight, that the robber and the robbed man, compose the sum total of Chourineur, no more nor less. What the devil will they do to me, when 't is proved that I robbed myself ?"

"Truly," said Germain, relieved, "you are right. But since you have felt such interest for me, why did you not address me when you entered the prison ?"

"I discovered the plot which they formed against you. I might have denounced it before Pique Vinaigre commenced or finished his story, but to betray such bandits as those, did n't suit me. I preferred to trust to my own fists to rescue you from Squelette's claws; and when I first saw, him I said to myself, 'here is a first-rate chance to practice Mr. Rodolphe's style of fisticuffs, which first introduced me to his acquaintance.'"

"If all the prisoners had combined against you, what could you have done ?"

"I should have then screamed for help like an eagle; but it suited me better to do my own cooking, so as to be able to tell Mr. Rodolphe, 'I was the only one who meddled with the affair.' I have defended, and will defend you, young man, depend upon it."

At this moment the guard suddenly entered the room. "Mr. Germain, come to see the director as soon as possible. He wishes to speak with you immediately; and you, Chourineur, my brave fellow, go down to the Lion's Den. You shall be made provost, if it suits you, for you have all the qualities which are necessary to fulfill those functions, and the prisoners won't jest with a man of your build."

"It suits me very well. One might be captain or soldier while he is here."

"Do you still refuse my hand ?" said Germain to Chourineur, cordially.

"Oh, no, Mr. Germain ! No. I think that I can allow myself that pleasure, and I shake your hand with a good heart."

"We will meet again, for I am here under your protection, and I shall have nothing more to fear, and I will come down everyday into the yard."

"You may rest assured that if I wish it, no one shall speak to you here, unless he is on all fours; but now that I think of it, you know how to write; put on paper what I have just told you, and send the story to Mr. Rodolphe; he will then know that he has no reason to be anxious on your account, and that I am here with a good motive; for should he learn from any other source that Chourineur has stolen, and should n't hear the other side of the story, thunder ! it would n't suit me."

"Be quiet: I will write this very evening to my unknown protector; to-morrow you shall give me his direction, and the letter shall start. Farewell, once more ! thank you my brave fellow !"

"Farewell ! I must return to the swarm of villains over whom I am provost; and they will have to walk straight, or else stand from under."

"When I think that on my account, you have yet some time to dwell among these wretches——"

"What do I care ! There is no danger of their falling upon me. Mr. Rodolphe has sprinkled me so well that I am insured against fire;" and Chourineur followed the guard. Germain entered the director's room. What was his surprise ? he found Rigolette there ! The grisette was pale, agitated, with her eyes filled

with tears, yet smiling through them, her countenance indicating indescribable joy and happiness.

"I have good news to give you, sir," said the director to Germain. "The authorities have declared, that the accusation against you is withdrawn: particularly owing to some explanations which have been given; and I have received orders to release you immediately."

"Sir, what do you say? is it possible?"

Rigolette wished to speak, but was prevented by the strength of her own emotions; and she could only make an affirmative sign, and clasp her hands.

"Mademoiselle arrived here a few moments after I received the order for your release," added the director. "A letter of powerful recommendation which she brought me, has informed me of her touching devotion during your residence in prison. It is then with great pleasure that I have sent for you, confident that you will be rejoiced to give your arm to Mademoiselle, and leave this place."

"A dream! it must be a dream!" said Germain. "What goodness! Pardon me, if surprise and joy prevent me from expressing my gratitude as I should do."

"Neither can I, Mr. Germain, find a word to say," said Rigolette. "Judge of my happiness! when I left you, I met the friend of Mr. Rodolphe, who was waiting for me."

"Mr. Rodolphe again!" said Germain, astonished.

"Yes; now I can tell you everything Mr. Murph said to me. 'Germain is free; here is a letter for the director of the prison; before you arrive there, he will have received the order to release him; and you may conduct him from the prison.' I could not believe what I heard, and yet it was true. I hastily entered a cab; I arrived here; and it is now below, waiting for us."

We renounce the attempt to describe the delight of the two lovers, in leaving La Force;—the evening of unalloyed happiness which they passed in the little room of Rigolette, which Germain left at eleven o'clock, for the humble lodgings provided for him.

Let us sum up, in a few words, the facts and theories which we have endeavored to place in this episode of prison life. We shall esteem ourselves most happy, if we have been able to demonstrate—

The insufficiency, and the powerless nature of imprisonment in common:

The disproportion between the magnitude and the punishment of certain crimes—domestic theft and burglary; and certain offences—the breach of trust:

And finally, the actual impossibility of the poorer classes enjoying the benefits of the law.

END OF PART THE SEVENTH.

PART THE EIGHTH.

CHAPTER I..... PUNISHMENT.

We must again conduct the reader to the office of Jacques Ferrand, the notary. Thanks to the habitual loquacity of the clerks, almost incessantly occupied with the increasing eccentricity of their patron, we shall be able to expose the events which had taken place since the disappearance of Cecile.

"A hundred sous against ten, if the patron continues to grow thin for a month more, he will burst like a musket."

"The fact is, that since the servant who looked like an Alsatian, departed, there is nothing left of him but skin and bones."

"And what skin!"

"I think he must have been in love with the Alsatian, since he has grown so lank since her departure."

"The patron in love! what a joke!"

"On the contrary, he receives priests more than ever."

"And besides, the curate of the parish, a very upright man, as he went away yesterday, said to another priest, who was with him—'It is excellent! Mr. Jacques Ferrand is the ideal of charity and generosity upon earth!'"

"The curate said that by himself, and without effort?"

"What?"

"Did he say that the patron was the ideal of charity and generosity upon earth?"

"Yes; I heard him, myself."

"I must confess that I don't understand anything about it; the curate has the repntation—and he deserves it—of being what is called a first-rate pastor."

"That is true; and we should speak of the priest seriously, and with respect; he is as good and charitable as the 'Little blue mantle;'* and, when this compliment can be paid to a man, his character is established."

"That is no small praise."

"No; for the 'Little blue mantle' and the good priest, the people have but one cry—the cry of the heart."

"Then I must assert again, when the curate affirms this, he must be believed; for he is incapable of falsehood—and yet, to believe that the patron is charitable and generous! it sticks in the corner of my faith!"

"That's pretty! sweet and pretty, Chalomel!"

"I would as soon believe in a miracle, as in the patron's generosity—one is as incredible as the other."

"Mr. Ferrand generous! the man who would shear an egg!"

"However, gentlemen, consider the forty sous for our breakfast!"

"Fine proof, that! it is just like a pimple upon the nose—an accident."

"Yes, but on the other hand, the head clerk told me that the patron had received an enormous sum in treasury bills, and that—"

"Well, go on."

"Speak!"

"It 's a secret."

"That 's another reason for telling us."

"Well, give me your word of honor that you won't mention it."

"We give our word, by all that is dearest in the world! may my aunt Messidor make a fool of herself, if I speak!"

"And besides, gentlemen, we must remember what Louis XIV. majestically said to the Doge of Venice:

'When clerks a secret hear,
They always blab—that 's clear.'"

"Here is Chalomel again, with his eternal poetry and proverbs."

"I demand the head of Chalomel."

"Proverbs are the wisdom of nations—on that account I ask for your secret."

"Come, no fooling; I tell you that the head clerk made me promise to disclose it to no one."

"That may be; but he did not forbid you to tell it to everybody."

"In short, the secret won't be drawn from my head; depend upon that."

"He is dying with desire to tell us his secret."

"Well, the patron intends to sell his business; and perhaps at this very hour, 't is done."

"You do n't say so!"

"That 's queer news!"

"It is perfectly astonishing!"

"It is dazzling!"

"Without charge! who charged himself with the charge which he discharged!"

"That Chalomel will be the death of me, with his quidities."

"And to whom does he intend to sell it?"

"If he sells it, I presume that he intends to launch out, and give feasts and parties, like fashionable people"

"After all, he is pretty well off."

"And he has not the incumbrance of a family."

"I should think that he is pretty well off, for the master clerk spoke of more than one million, including the value of the commission."

"More than a million!"

"They say that he has speculated in stocks, in an underhand manner, with Commander Robert; and that he has made much money."

"Besides, he lives like a beggar."

"Yes, but these stingy fellows, when they once begin to spend their money, they become more prodigal than any other people."

"I am of Chalomel's mind; I rather think the patron wishes to lead an easy life."

"And he would be a cursed fool if he did n't sink into luxury, and plunge himself into the delights of Golconda, if he has the means; for the inflated Ossian says, in 'the grotto of Fingal:'

'Any notary that turns out bright,
If he has *quibus*, is in the right.'

"I demand the head of Chalomel."

"'T is absurd."

"The patron does n't look much as if he was thinking of amusing himself."

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* We must be allowed to mention here, with veneration, the name of that excellent man, Mr. Champion; with whom we have not the honor of a personal acquaintance, but of whom all the poor of Paris speak with as much respect as gratitude.

"He looks as if he was attending the devil's funeral."

"And the curate praises his charity!"

"Well, 'charity begins at home.'"

"You do n't even know your commandments, irreligious dog! if the patron asks alms of himself for the greatest pleasures, it is his duty to grant himself the gratification; otherwise he would hold himself in little esteem."

"What astonishes me is, that intimate friend, who has fallen from the clouds, and sticks to him like his shadow."

"Add to that, he has a bad face."

"His hair is red as a beet."

"I am rather inclined to think that this intruder is the result of some *faux pas* of Mr. Ferrand in early youth."

"I demand, again, the head of Chalomel!"

"That 's right; it is impossible to talk rationally a moment with him."

"What nonsense, to call the unknown the patron's son! he is older than the notary."

"What of that?"

"How! can the son be older than the father?"

"It is a very extreme case."

"How do you explain it?"

"In that case, the intruder must have committed the *faux pas*, and be the father of Mr. Ferrand, instead of his son."

"I demand the head of Chalomel!"

"Take no notice of him; there is no end to his nonsense, when he once commences."

"What is certain, is, that the intruder has a bad face; and he sticks to Mr. Ferrand like a crab."

"He is constantly with him in his study, and one cannot stir without the other."

"It seems to me, that I have seen that intruder in this house before."

"I have not."

"I say, gentlemen, have you not observed, that, within a few days, a man, with light moustache and a military air, comes regularly, about once in two hours, and sends the porter after the intruder, who comes down, talks a moment with the man of the moustache; after which he turns round like an automaton, and returns again in two hours."

"That is true; I have observed it. It seems to me, also, that I meet when going home. some men who watch the house."

"I think, seriously, that something extraordinary is going on here."

"He who lives will see."

"Upon this subject, the head clerk knows more than we do; but he plays the *diplomate*."

"By the way, where has the head clerk gone?"

"He has gone to see that countess who was stabbed. It seems now, that she is out of danger."

"The Countess McGregor?"

"Yes; this morning she sent for the patron; but he dispatched the head clerk in his place."

"It is, perhaps, to draw up her will."

"No; she is getting better."

"Has n't the head clerk his hands full, since he has taken Germain's place as cashier?"

"Speaking of Germain: that is another queer affair."

"What is that?"

"The patron, in order to set Germain at liberty, has declared, that it was he, Mr. Ferrand, who had made an error in his accounts, and that he has found the money which he claimed of Germain."

"I do n't call that queer, but just. You remember that I always said that Germain was not a man who could steal."

"It was very annoying, anyhow, to be arrested and imprisoned as a thief."

"I would demand damages and costs of Mr. Ferrand, if I was in his place."

"He ought to have restored him to his situation, to convince every one that Germain was not guilty."

"Yes; but, perhaps, Germain did n't want the place again."

"Is he still on the farm, to which he went after he left the prison, and where he wrote to inform us that Mr. Ferrand had withdrawn the accusation?"

"Probably; for I went yesterday to the house he mentioned, and I was told there, that he was still in the country, and we could write to him at Bouqueval, by the way of Ecouen, directed to the farm of Madame George."

"Hallo! gentlemen! a carriage," said Chalomel, bending over toward the window; "but it is not a splendid equipage, like that of the famous viscount. Do you remember that dashing Saint Remy, with his foot-boy covered with silver lace, and his large coachman in a white periwig?"

"It is a plain hackney-coach which is before the door now."

"And who alights?"

"Hold on: a black dress."

"A woman! a woman! let us see her."

"That Leap-gutters is indecently sensual, for his age; he thinks of nothing but women; we shall be obliged to chain him up, or he will seize the Sabines in the street; for, as the Swan of Cambray has it, in his 'Treatise on Education,' for the use of the Dauphine:

> Distrust Leap-gutters, when on the sex,
> They make assault, and strive to vex."

"I demand the head of Chalomel!"

"Why, Mr. Chalomel, you said a black dress, and I thought ——"

"It is the curate of the parish, fool; let that serve you as a lesson."

"The curate of the parish? the good pastor?"

"It is himself, gentlemen."

"He is a worthy man."

"He is no Jesuit, I assure you."

"I know it; and if all priests were like him, everybody would be pious."

"Silence! some one is coming in."

"Hush! hush! it is he."

And all the clerks, bending over the desk, drove their pens with commendable industry. The pale countenance of the priest was, at the same time, mild and grave, intelligent and venerable; his expression was meditative and serene; a small black cowl was upon his head, and his long gray hair fell down upon the collar of his cloak. We must add that, owing to the simplicity and artlessness of his disposition, this excellent priest had always been a dupe to the cunning and hypocrisy of Jacques Ferrand.

"Is your worthy patron in his study, my children?" asked the curate.

"Yes, sir," said Chalomel, rising respectfully; and he opened for the priest the door of the room adjoining the study.

Hearing some one speaking in a passionate tone, in the notary's study, the curate walked rapidly toward the door and knocked.

"Come in," said a voice, with a marked Italian accent.

The priest entered, and found himself face to face with Polidori and Jacques Ferrand. The clerks of the notary had good reason for predicting the demise of their patron. Since the flight of Cecile, his most intimate acquaintance could hardly recognize the notary. Although his face was perfectly cadaverous, almost lividly pale, a hectic flush was plainly delineated upon his prominent cheek-bones; a nervous twitching and convulsive starts, constantly jerked his frame; his lean hands were parched and feverish; his large green glasses concealed his blood-shot eyes, radiant with a wild and unnatural lustre of disease. In one word, that repulsive countenance betrayed that he was the victim of a rapid and incurable consumption.

The physiognomy of Polidori was in strange contrast with the notary. No expression could be more sarcastic, no smile more sneering and bitter, than those of the confederate scoundrel. His pale and wrinkled forehead was surmounted by a large growth of bright red hair, in which a few gray locks were mingled; his eyes, sharp, keen, and sea-green, were close to his hooked nose; his thin and compressed lips conveyed clearly the malice and irony of his nature. Dressed in a suit of black, he was seated near the writing-desk of the notary.

When the priest entered, both arose.

"How is your health, to-day, my worthy Mr. Ferrand?" said the Abbè, with solicitude; "do you find yourself any better?"

"My health does not improve, my venerable friend; the fever does not leave me," replied the notary; "want of sleep has ruined my health; but let the will of God be done."

"You observe, my good Abbè," said Polidori, in a sanctimonious manner, "with what Christian resignation our exemplary friend is gifted. His health does not seem to improve: he finds no relief from his pain, except in acts of benevolence and charity."

"I do not deserve such praises: I beg of you to dispense with them," said the notary drily, concealing with difficulty his rage and restrained vengeful feelings, at the biting sneers of his companion. "The Lord alone is the judge of what is good and what is evil. I am but a miserable sinner."

"We are all sinners," replied the Abbè mildly; "but we have not all the unprecedented charity which distinguishes you, my respected friend. There are but a few mortals, who have the self-denial to relinquish the goods of this world, and devote their property to such pious uses. Do you still persist in selling your business, in order to devote yourself more exclusively to the duties of religion?"

"I sold my commission day before yesterday; and by a few concessions, I have been able to receive the price in cash. This sum, added to others I possess, will serve to found the institution of which I spoke to you. The plan of it I have now completed in all its details, and intend to submit it to you."

"Ah! my worthy friend," said the priest, with a profound and holy admiration, "to do so much good, in such an unostentatious and natural manner, is, I repeat, an unexampled instance of humble philanthropy. There are not praises enough to bestow on you."

"But few individuals, like my worthy friend Jacques, unite wealth and piety, intelligence and charity," said Polidori, with an ironical smile, which the priest did not perceive.

The notary involuntarily clenched his fists at this repetition of sneering eulogy. He cast from under his glasses a look of infernal hatred upon Polidori.

"You see, sir," said the beloved companion of the notary, "he is incessantly subject to these nervous attacks; and yet he will apply no remedy to them. He grieves and afflicts me. My poor friend is his own destroyer."

The notary started again convulsively at this renewed attack, but restrained his feelings.

A man less artless than the Abbé, would have noticed in the preceding conversation, and in that which is to follow, that Jacques Ferrand was constantly struggling to conceal outbreaks of hatred and rage; for it is unnecessary to state, that a will superior to his own—the will of Rodolphe—dictated to this man words and actions which were diametrically opposed to his real disposition. At times, driven to desperation, the wretch, whom vengeance had at length reached, struggled with the invisible and mighty authority which was awarding to him his deserts; but one glance of Polidori calmed his resistance, and put an end to his indecision. With concentrated rage, which he was obliged to smother with all the powers he could summon, the culprit was compelled to bend his neck to the yoke which he could not break.

"Alas! sir," said Polidori, who seemed to make it a part of his duty to goad his accomplice to the very limits of endurance —"Alas! sir, I cannot prevail upon my poor friend to pay the least attention to his health. I beseech you, my good Abbé, to unite your entreaties with mine, that we may persuade him to be more careful of his valuable life; if not for his own sake, for his friends, who are bound to him by so many ties—for the unfortunate, whose support and succor he is."

"Enough! enough!" muttered the notary, in a hollow voice.

"No; it is not enough," said the priest, with emotion. "You cannot be too frequently told that you are not your own; and that it is wrong for you to neglect your health in this manner. I have now been acquainted with you for ten years, and never saw you sick before; but for about a month past, a singular change has come over you. I was the more struck with the alteration of your features, as there was an interval when I did not see you, and when I met you again I could not conceal my surprise: but the change which I have observed in you within a few days is much greater; you are rapidly growing worse and worse, and cause us great anxiety. I beseech you, my worthy friend, to take care of your health."

"I am very grateful to you, my excellent friend, for your interest. But I assure you, that my situation is not as alarming as you suppose."

"Since you are so obstinate," replied Polidori, "I will inform the Abbé of everything; he loves, esteems, and honors you highly; what will then his admiration be when he hears of your new meritorious acts? when he learns the true cause of your declining health?"

"What new wonder have you to disclose?"

"My dear sir," said the notary, with impatience, "I sent for you in order to communicate to you some projects of great importance; and not to have my friend ridiculously proclaim my praise."

"You know, Jacques, that you must submit to hear everything I choose to say," said Polidori, looking steadfastly at the notary. Jacques Ferrand cast down his head and was silent. Polidori continued:

"You have, perhaps, observed, sir, that the first indication of the nervous disorder of my friend, occurred shortly after the abominable scandal which Louise Morel caused in this house."

The notary shuddered.

"You are then acquainted, sir, with the crime of that unfortunate girl," said the priest, astonished. "I thought that you had been in Paris but a few days."

"Certainly, sir! But Jacques has revealed everything to me as his friend and physician; for he attributes almost entirely to his indignation against the crime of Louise, the nervous attacks to which he is subject now. But this is not all; my poor friend was destined to new misfortunes, which, as you see, have undermined his constitution. An old servant, who had been for many years attached to him by the ties of gratitude——"

"Madam Seraphin," said the curate, interrupting Polidori: "I heard of the death of that unfortunate woman, drowned by means of a lamentable accident; and I can readily conceive of Mr. Ferrand's grief. Ten years of faithful services cannot be easily forgotten. Such regrets are as honorable to the master as to the servant."

"I intreat you, my dear friend, not to mention my virtues! You distress me; I am pained by it."

"And who shall speak of them, then? Will it be yourself?" replied Polidori, affectionately. "You will be compelled to praise him more. You are, perhaps, ignorant who the servant actually was, that succeeded Louise Morel and Madam Seraphin. In short, you do not know what he has done for that poor Cecile —for such was her name."

The notary, in spite of himself, started in his seat; his eyes glistened behind his glasses; a burning flush spread over his pallid face.

"Silence! silence!" he exclaimed, partly rising from his seat; "not one word more! I forbid you!"

"Come, come, be calm!" said the Abbé, smiling with kindness; "I am sure there is some new generous action to be revealed, and I approve of the indiscretion of your friend; I was unacquainted with the servant, for shortly after her arrival at the house of our worthy friend, his numerous engagements compelled him to interrupt our intercourse for a reason."

"It was to hide from you the benevolent act which he designed, and although I may wound his modesty, he must listen to me while I reveal to you all," said Polidori, smiling.

Jacques Ferrand was silent; he leaned upon his desk with his elbow, and concealed his forehead in his hands.

CHAPTER II..... THE BANK FOR THE POOR.

"You must know then, sir," continued Polidori, addressing the curate, accompanying each word with an ironical glance at Jacques Ferrand, "you must know that my friend found in his new servant, whom, as I said before, was called Cecile, the most extraordinary qualities, great modesty, angelic sweetness, and, above all, sincere piety. That is not all. Jacques, as you know, is indebted to his long habits of business for an extreme penetration, and he soon discovered that the young female—for she was young and beautiful—that this young and beautiful woman was not made for a servant, and that to principles of austere virtue the joined a superior education and varied acquirements."

"This is, indeed, surprising," said the Abbé, deeply interested; "I was entirely ignorant of these circumstances. But, what ails you, my excellent Mr. Ferrand? you seem to be in great suffering!"

"I am!" said the notary, wiping the cold perspiration from his brow, such great restraint was necessary to conceal his wrath, "my head aches slightly, but I shall soon recover."

Polidori shrugged his shoulders and smiled.

"You must observe, sir, that such is the invariable state of Mr. Ferrand, when some of his secret acts of charity are revealed; he is so unostentatious in his benevolence; but I am fortunately with him, and shall render him exact justice. Let us return to Cecile: she soon divined the excellence of Jacques's heart, and when he questioned her respecting her past life, she artlessly confessed that, being a stranger, without resources, and reduced, in consequence of the ill conduct of her husband, to such a humble situation, she regarded it as a special interposition of Providence that she had obtained a situation in the house of a man so devout as Mr. Ferrand. Jacques observing that she was gifted with so much mind, virtue, resignation, and piety, did not hesitate; he wrote to some persons in the native place of the unfortunate woman to collect some information respecting her. They confirmed the statements which had been made to our friend, and Mr. Ferrand, convinced that his kindness was bestowed upon a worthy object, blessed Cecile as a father, sent her back to her own country, with a sum of money, which would enable her to wait for better days, and the opportunity of finding a more suitable situation. I shall not add any praise—the facts are more eloquent than my words."

"Excellent, excellent!" exclaimed the curate, moved.

"My dear friend," said Jacques Ferrand, in a short, hollow tone of voice; "I do not wish to abuse your precious moments; speak no more of me, I pray you, but of the projects respecting which I asked your presence, and for which I shall invoke your kind assistance."

"I can see that the praises of your friend wound your modesty; let us employ ourselves about your new plan of benevolence, and strive to forget that you are its author; but before that, let us speak of the business you have already intrusted to my care. I have, according to your desire, deposited in the Bank of France, in my own name, the sum of three hundred thousand francs, designed as a restitution by some person of whom you are the agent, and which is to be placed in the hands of the individuals to whom it belongs, by me. It was your desire that this deposite should not remain with you, although it would have been as safe in your charge as in the Bank."

"In this respect, I obeyed the instructions of the unknown author of this restitution: he acts in this manner for the repose of his conscience. It was his desire that I should confide this sum to you, and ask you to pay it over to Madam de Fermont, a widow, whose family name was Renneville,"—the voice of the notary trembled slightly, while pronouncing these names—"when that lady presents herself before you, and establishes her claim."

"I shall fulfill the duty with which you have intrusted me," said the priest.

"It is not the last one."

"So much the better, if the others resemble this; for without wishing to inquire into the motives which prompt it, I am always touched with a voluntary restitution. These sovereign decrees which conscience alone imposes, and which are executed faithfully to the internal monitor, are always a sign of sincere repentance, and an expiation of such a nature is never fruitless."

"It is true, sir, three hundred thousand francs restored at once, is a rare illustration of the power of conscience, but I have been more inquisitive than you, yet what has my curiosity availed against the immovable discretion of Jacques; so that I am still ignorant of the name of the honest man who makes this noble restitution."

"Whoever he may be," said the priest, "I am confident that he holds a high place in the esteem of Mr. Ferrand."

"Indeed, that honest man is highly esteemed by me," replied the notary, with a bitterness which was ill dissembled.

"And this is not all, sir," replied Polidori, looking at Jacques Ferrand in a significant manner. "You will see how far this unknown restorer carries his generous scruples; and if I must tell everything, I very much suspect that our friend has contributed to awaken these scruples, and to find the means to calm them."

"How so?" asked the priest.

"What do you mean?" added the notary.

"And the Morels—that good and honest family?"

"Oh! yes, yes! I forgot," said Jacques Ferrand, in a hollow voice.

"Imagine, sir, that the author of this restitution, probably under the advice of Jacques, not satisfied with restoring this large amount, wishes yet—— but I will leave this worthy friend of ours to speak. I will not deprive him of that pleasure."

"I listen to you, my dear Mr. Ferrand," said the priest.

"You know," continued Jacques Ferrand, in a sanctimonious manner, mingled with occasional emotions of revolt against the task imposed upon him—movements which were indicated by the change of his voice, and the hesitation of his manner; "you know, sir, that the misconduct of Louise Morel afflicted her father so terribly, that he has become deranged. The large family of the artisan run the risk of perishing from misery, being deprived of their only support. Providence has come to their aid, and—the—person who makes the voluntary restitution of which you have consented to be the intermediary, did not think that he—had—sufficiently expiated a—a—great abuse of confidence, and therefore asked of me, if I knew of any interesting and unfortunate family to relieve? I pointed out to his generosity, the family of Morel; and I was requested, after receiving the necessary funds, which I will give to you presently, to commit to you the office of procuring a life annuity for Morel, reverting to his wife and children."

"While I accept this important trust, I am astonished that you yourself, were not charged with it."

"The unknown person supposed, and I agree with him, that his good works would acquire a new value—would be, as I may say, sanctified by passing through such pious hands as yours."

"I have no reply to make; I will settle an annuity of two thousand francs on the life of Morel, the worthy and unhappy father of Louise; but I believe like your friend, that you are no stranger to this new expiatory gift."

"I pointed out the Morel family, nothing more; I pray you to believe so."

"Now," said Polidori, "you will see to what height of philanthropic views my good Jacques has reached concerning the charitable establishment of which we conversed. He will read to you the plan which he has arranged in all its details—the necessary sum for establishing the institution is there in his vault; but since yesterday a scruple entered his mind, and if he dares not disclose, I will.

"It is unnecessary," said Jacques Ferrand, who occasionally preferred to speak himself, than to be forced to endure in silence the praises of his accomplice. "This is the fact, sir; I have reflected that it would be more humble, more Christian-like, that this establishment should not be founded in my own name."

"Your humility seems to me to be exaggerated," exclaimed the priest; "you can, nay, you ought to be legitimately proud of your charitable foundation; it is your right, almost your duty, to attach your name to it."

"I prefer, however, to preserve the incognito. I am decided upon the subject; and I rely sufficiently upon your kindness, to hope that you will condescend to preserve profound secrecy in all the formalities; and to select, yourself, all the inferior officers of the establishment: I have only reserved to myself the nomination of the director and the porter."

"Even though I took no pleasure in assisting you in this work of yours, it would be my duty to accept; and I therefore do accept."

"Now, if you are willing," said Polidori, "my friend will read to you the plan, which he has definitely arranged."

"Since you are so kind," said Jacques Ferrand, with bitterness, "read it yourself; spare me the trouble, I pray you."

"No, no," replied Polidori, casting upon the notary a look, the sarcastic signification of which he fully appreciated; "I anticipate great pleasure in hearing you read, yourself, the noble sentiments which have induced you to establish this philanthropic institution."

"Very well, I will read," said the notary, roughly taking a paper from his desk.

Polidori, for a long time the accomplice of Jacques Ferrand, was perfectly acquainted with the crimes, and even the secret thoughts, of that wretch; and he could not restrain a cruel smile, at seeing him forced to read the following note, dictated by Rodolphe. As will be seen, the Prince had adopted an inexorable system in the punishment of the notary: lustful, he tortured him through his lust—miserly, he reached him through his avarice—hypocritical, through his hypocrisy. For Rodolphe had selected the venerable priest as an agent of the restitution and expiation enforced upon Ferrand, for the reason that he might doubly punish the wretch, for having, by his detestable hypocrisy, won the artless esteem and frank disposition of the good curate. Was it not, indeed, a severe punishment, for this arch imposter, for this hardened criminal, to practice, actually, the Christian virtues which he had so often affected; and to justify, while shuddering with rage, the eulogies of a devout Abbé, who had been, thus far, his dupe!

Jacques Ferrand read this note with the restrained agony, which we leave the reader to imagine:

"A BANK FOR THE RELIEF OF UNEMPLOYED LABORERS.

"'*Love one another*,' said our Saviour. These divine words contain the germ of all duty, all virtue, and all charity.

"They have inspired the humble founder of this institution. To our Saviour alone belongs the good which it may do. Although the founder is limited in the means of action, he desires that as large a number as possible of his brethren of the human family, should participate in the aid which he offers them.

"He addresses, in the first place, honest and laborious workmen, with a family, who, for want of employment, are often reduced to the severest extremities.

"It is not humiliating alms that he offers to his brother, but gratuitous loans. May they be a frequent preventive from burdening their future lives, by those impoverishing loans that they are often compelled to receive, while waiting for employment—their only resource in sustaining a family they are compelled to to support.

"For security of such loans, he asks only of his brother a promise, based solely upon his honor. He realizes an annual revenue of twelve thousand francs, which is distributed in loans of twenty to forty francs, without interest, to unemployed married workmen, dwelling in the seventh district. This district is chosen, from its being one of those in which the working classes are the most numerous.

"These loans will be granted only to such of the working classes of both sexes, as can present a certificate of good conduct obtained from their last employer, and in which the cause and the date of the suspension of work will be indicated.

"These loans will be reimbursable monthly, in the proportion of one-sixth or one-twelfth, at the option of the borrower, com-

mencing on the day when employment shall be obtained. He will merely sign an *agreement of honor* to return the loan at the time appointed, in which two of his companions will join as security, for the purpose of giving force, solidity, and solemnity to the sworn promise.* Neither the workman who fails to return the sum borrowed by him, nor those who become his security, will be able to obtain a new loan; for he will have forfeited a sacred engagement, and, furthermore, deprived many of his brother-workmen of the advantage which he has enjoyed, as the sum, not being returned, becomes lost to the bank for the poor. If these loans, on the contrary, are scrupulously returned, the revenue will increase from year to year in amount; and at a future day, other districts will be able to participate in the same benefits. Men should not be degraded by alms, nor idleness encouraged by fruitless charity. In order to stimulate sentiments of honor and probity, natural to the industrious classes—in order to approach with fraternal aid the laborer who finds it difficult to live from day to day, owing to the insufficiency of his wages, and who cannot suspend his own wants and those of his family because labor is suspended—such are the motives† which have dictated the establishment of this bank for the benefit of the unemployed poor. Let His name be glorified by it, who has said, 'Love one another.'"

"Oh! sir," exclaimed the Abbé, with a religious admiration, "what a charitable idea; now I appreciate your emotions, while reading those lines of such touching simplicity."

The voice of Jacques Ferrand, in finishing the memorandum was really much affected. His patience and courage were completely exhausted; but attentively watched by Polidori, he was unable to contravene the slightest orders of Rodolphe. Let the reader imagine the notary's rage, at being forced to dispose of his fortune so charitably, in favor of a class whom he had mercilessly persecuted in the person of Morel, the lapidary.

"Do you not think, sir, that the idea of our generous friend is excellent?" said Polidori.

"Ah, sir! I, who am intimately acquainted with all kinds of misery, can, better than any one else, appreciate the importance of this loan, to poor and honest laborers without employment, which would seem so insignificant to the fortunate. Alas! how much good the rich might dispense, if they knew that, with a sum too small to gratify their caprices—that, with thirty or forty francs, which would be restored scrupulously, but without interest, they might frequently secure the future well-being, and sometimes save the honor of a family, which, from want of employment, is exposed to the frightful temptations, which are the result of misery and poverty. Indigence, without labor, never finds any credit; and, if small sums are loaned to them, without security, it is often with a usurious interest. Thirty sous are borrowed for a week, and forty must be returned; and yet these small loans are rare and difficult. The loans of the Mont de Piété‡ cost, in certain circumstances, three hundred per cent. The artisan without labor, often deposits for forty sous, the only blanket which, in the winter nights, protects him and his family from the severity of the cold. But," continued the Abbé, with enthusiasm, "a loan of thirty or forty francs, without interest, and payable in twelfths, when work returns, will be the hope, life, and salvation, of honest workmen. With what punctuality they will pay their debt! it is not in that class that there will be failures. The debt is sacred, which they contract to give bread to their wives and children."

"How grateful to you, Jacques, must be the praises of the curate!" said Polidori, "and how many more he will bestow upon you, when he shall learn your intention to establish a gratuitous Monte de Piété!"

"What do you say?"

"Certainly, sir; Jacques has not forgotten that institution; which may properly be called a branch of his Bank for the Poor."

"Can it be possible!" said the priest, clasping his hands in admiration.

"Proceed, Jacques," said Polidori.

The notary continued, in a rapid voice, for the scene was perfectly odious to him:

"The assisting loans of the Bank have, for their object, to alleviate one of the greatest calamities of the laborer—the interruption of his employment. They will, therefore, be only granted to artisans unemployed.

"But other embarrassments must be anticipated, which afflict the employed laborer. Often an interruption of one or two days, frequently brought upon them by fatigue, or by the attention which a sick wife or child requires, or by being obliged to change their residence, deprives the workmen of thier daily resources. They are then obliged to resort to the Mont de Piété, from which he obtains advances, at a great loss, or to clandestine pawn-brokers, who charge an enormous interest. Desirous, as far as possible, to alleviate the sufferings of his brethren, the founder of the Bank has invested a revenue of twenty-five thousand francs, upon articles, ten francs being the limit of the sum he is able to advance on each.

"The borrowers shall not pay either expenses or interest, but they must prove that they follow an honorable profession, and furnish a declaration from their employer, which shall vouch for their morality.

"At the end of two years, the articles which shall not have been redeemed, shall be sold without any charge; the amount proceeding from the surplus of such sale, shall be placed at five per cent. interest, for the benefit of the borrower.

"At the expiration of five years, should this sum have not been called for, it shall become the property of the Poor Man's Bank, and being added to the consecutive returns of funds, will allow the number of loans to be successively augmented.*

"The administration and the office of the Poor Man's Bank, shall be established at No. 17 rue du Temple, in a house purchased for that purpose in the centre of this populous quarter of the city. An income of ten thousand francs shall be appropriated to the expenses of the administration of the Poor Man's Bank, of which shall be director for life——"

Polidori interrupted the notary, and said to the priest, "You will see, sir, by the choice of directors of this administration, whether Jacques knows how to repair the evil which he has involuntarily committed. You know that by a mistake, which he deplores, he had falsely accused his cashier of appropriating to himself a large sum of money which was afterward found."

"Without doubt."

"Well; it is to that honest fellow that Jacques has given the life direction of this bank, with a salary of four thousand francs. Is not this admirable, Mr. Abbé?"

"There is nothing in the world which can now astonish me; or, rather, nothing has ever yet astonished me," said the priest; "the fervent piety, the virtues of our worthy friend, were certain, sooner or later, to produce such a result. To consecrate his fortune to such a noble institution—oh! it is positively admirable!"

"More than a million! Mr. Abbé," said Polidori, "more than a million, amassed by dint of order, economy, and probity! And yet there have been wretches, capable of accusing Jacques of avarice! 'How can it be otherwise?' said they, 'his business brings him in fifty or sixty thousand francs a year, and his life is a continued series of privations.'"

"To such, I would reply," said the Abbé, enthusiastically, "that for fifteen years, he lived like a poor man, that he might one day magnificently relieve the poor."

"Be then, at least, joyous and proud of what you have done," exclaimed Polidori, addressing Jacques Ferrand, who, gloomy, overwhelmed, and his eyes fixed, appeared to be absorbed in profound meditation.

"Alas!" said the Abbé, sorrowfully, "it is not in this world, that such virtues can be recompensed; his ambition looks higher!"

* It may not be known, perhaps, that the working classes generally adhere so tenaciously to a promise thus given, that the vampires, who lead to them for a short week, at the enormous tax of three hundred to four hundred per cent., require no other written engagement; and that these loans are always regularly repaid. La Halle and its environs, above all, is the spot where these abominable negotiations are carried on.

† Our project, upon which we have consulted many well-informed and honorable workmen, is, undoubtedly, very imperfect; nevertheless, we offer it to the reflections of the persons who feel an interest in the working classes, hoping that the germ of utility which it contains, (we do not fear to assert it,) may be made fruitful, by minds more powerful than our own.

‡ We borrow the following information from an eloquent and excellent work, published by M. Alphonse Esquiros, in the *Revue de Paris*, of June 11th, 1843: "The average number of the articles pawned with the Commissioners of the eighth and twelfth districts, for *three francs*, is at least *five hundred* daily. The working population, that is reduced to such limited resources, obtain, from the Mont de-Piété, (a public pawn-brokerage establishment, supported by government,) the most trivial advances in proportion to their wants. At the present time, the advances of the Mont-de-Piété, rise, in ordinary cases, to thirteen per cent.; but they increase, in a most frightful ratio, when they are made for a less time than one year. The articles deposited by the poor classes, being generally of the first necessity, they are consequently withdrawn almost as soon as deposited; they are articles which are regularly pawned and withdrawn, once a week. Under these circumstances, let us suppose a loan of three francs; the interest paid by the borrower will then be calculated at two hundred and ninety-four per cent. per annum. The money which is amassed yearly in the chest of the Mont-de-Piété, is necessarily expended in supporting the hospitals. The sum is very considerable. In that year of distress—1840—its revenue amounted to four hundred and twenty-two thousand two hundred and fifteen francs. It cannot be denied," says Mr. Esquiros, "with good reason, that this sum has a meritorious destination; for, coming from misery, it returns to misery; but, notwithstanding, this grave question arises: Is it right, that the relief of the poor, should come from the poor? Let us, however," says Mr. Esquiros, "while demanding that great meliorations should take place at the Mont-de-Piété, render homage to the zeal of the present director, Mr. Delaroche, who has already introduced useful reforms."

* We have always said that in some of the small states of Italy, there exist gratuitous Loan Societies, (Mont-de Piété) which are charitable institutions, having considerable analogy with the establishment we are now imagining.

"Jacques," said Polidori, touching the notary lightly on the shoulder, "finish reading the paper."

The notary shuddered, passed his hand over his forehead, and then, addressing the priest, said: "Your pardon, Mr. Abbé; I was meditating on the immense extension that this Bank may attain, by the mere accumulation of its revenues. If every year the loans were regularly repaid, and they were not intrenched upon at the end of four years, it could afford to make gratuitous loans to the amount of one hundred and fifty thousand francs, or advances upon pledges. It is enormous! enormous! and I congratulate myself upon it," added he, thinking, with smothered rage, upon the value of the sacrifice imposed upon him. He rejoined: "I was, I believe, at the——"

"The nomination of François Germain as director of this association," said Polidori.

Jacques Ferrand continued: "An income of ten thousand francs shall be appropriated for the expenses and the administration of the 'Bank for the unemployed poor,' of whom shall be appointed as director, during his life, François Germain; and the keeper of which shall be Alfred Pipelet, at present porter of the house.

"The Abbé Dumont, to whom the funds requisite for the foundation of the establishment shall be delivered, shall institute a committee of superintendence, composed of the Mayor and Justice of the peace of the district, who shall select as their coadjutors in the committee, such persons as they shall consider most useful in the patronage and extension of the Poor Man's Bank; for the founder of the association will consider the little he has done a thousand times overpaid, if some charitable persons will concur in his good work.

"The opening of the bank shall be announced with all possible publicity.

"In conclusion, the founder of the bank reiterates, that he ascribes no merit to himself in what he is doing for his fellowmen. His thought is merely the echo of the divine command, 'LOVE ONE ANOTHER.'"

"And the place assigned to you in heaven, will be near to Him who pronounced those immortal words!" exclaimed the Abbé, hastening with delight to press the hands of Jacques Ferrand between his.

The notary was completely petrified; his strength failed him. Without replying to the congratulations of the Abbé, he hastened to deliver to him, in treasury notes, the considerable sum which was necessary for the endowment of the association, and for the income of Morel the lapidary.

"I dare hope," at length said Jacques Ferrand, "that you will not refuse this last mission confided to your charity; and moreover, a foreigner, named Sir Walter Murph, who has given me his opinion on the drawing up of this project, will in some measure lighten your labors; and will call upon you this very day to consult with you as to bringing this matter into operation, and will place himself at your disposal, if he can be of any service to you. With the exception of this person, I beg that you will, as far as I am concerned, keep this matter a profound secret."

"You are right. God knows what you are doing for your brethren: the rest is of but little import. My only regret is, not being able to give more than my zeal to this noble institution. It will, at least, be as ardent as yours is inexhaustible. But what is the matter with you! you turn pale! Do you feel ill?"

"A little, Mr. Abbé; reading so long a time, and the emotions which your benevolent words awaken in me, have increased the indisposition I have felt for some days past: pardon my weakness," said Jacques Ferrand, sitting down with difficulty; "there is nothing alarming in it, doubtless, but I am quite exhausted."

"You would, perhaps, do well to lay down a little," said the priest with lively interest, "and to send for your physician."

"I am a physician," said Polidori. "The state of Jacques Ferrand demands great care, and I will attend to him."

The notary shuddered. "A short repose will, I trust, soon reestablish you," said the priest. "I leave you to it; but before that, I will give you a receipt for this sum."

While the priest was writing the receipt, Jacques Ferrand and Polidori exchanged a look which it would be impossible to describe.

"Come, come; take heart and hope for everything," said the priest, delivering the receipt to Jacques Ferrand. "For a long time, God will not permit one of his best servants to quit a life, so usefully, so religiously employed. To-morrow I will return to see you. Adieu, sir. Adieu, my friend—my worthy and holy friend." The priest then left the room.

Jacques Ferrand and Polidori remained alone.

CHAPTER III. ..... THE ACCOMPLICES.

He was hardly gone, when Jacques Ferrand uttered a most dreadful imprecation. His despair and rage so long compressed, broke out with fury. His heart palpitating, his features drawn up, his eyes staring wildly, he walked with hurried steps up and down his office, like a wild beast that could not break his chain.

Polidori, who appeared quite calm, attentively observed the notary.

"Hell and fury!" at last exclaimed Jacques Ferrand, in a voice bursting with passion! "My whole fortune swallowed up by these stupid and charitable works. I, who despise and execrate mankind!—I, who had lived only to deceive and rob them!—I, to found philanthropic establishments! to force me to it by infernal means! This master of yours is then a demon!" exclaimed he, in a state of fearful exasperation, and stopping suddenly before Polidori.

"I have no master," coolly replied the latter, "but, like yourself, I have a judge."

"To obey, like a simpleton, the slightest orders of this man!" rejoined Jacques Ferrand, with redoubled fury, "and that priest to be the dupe of my hypocrisy—every one of the praises which he with such sincerity bestowed upon me, pierced me like a dagger—and to be compelled to constrain my feelings—continually to constrain!——"

"If not—the scaffold!"

"Not to be able to escape this fatal domination! But, in fine, here's more than a million I have given up—if, with this house, I have still a hundred thousand francs remaining, it is as much as I can count upon. What can they require further?"

"You are not at the end of it yet. The Prince knows through Badinot, that your man of straw, Petit Jean, was only your representative in the usurious loans made to the Viscount de St. Remy, whom you have, moreover, still, under the name of Petit Jean, so roughly ransomed for his forgeries. The sums which St. Remy has paid, had been lent to him by a great lady. This is probably another restitution which awaits you, but they adjourn it, doubtless, because it is more delicate——"

"Chained—chained here!"

"As strongly as by an iron-cable."

"And you, my jailer! wretch!"

"What would you have? According to the Prince's system, he punishes crime by crime—the accomplice by the accomplice."

"Oh! fury!"

"And, unfortunately, most impotent fury. For, until he shall send, to tell me Jacques Ferrand may leave his house, I shall remain beside you like your shadow. Hear me, then. As well as you I have deserved the scaffold. If I fail to obey the orders I have received as your jailer, my head falls! You could not, therefore, have a keeper less easy to be bribed. As to both flying together, that's impossible. We could not take a step outside this house, without falling into the hands of those who are watching day and night this door, and that of the next house, our only issue, should we climb the wall."

"Death and fury! I know it well!"

"Therefore resign yourself, for all flight is impossible. Should it succeed, it offers but a doubtful chance eventually. The police would be employed to track our steps. On the contrary, you, by obeying, and I, by watching that you do obey, are both sure of not having our throats cut. Again I say, let us both be resigned."

"Do not exasperate me by your ironical calmness, or I will——"

"Or you will—do what? I am on my guard; I am armed; and even should you find the poisoned stiletto of Cecile——"

"Be silent!"

"That would not assist you. You know that I must give, every two hours, to whom it may concern, a bulletin of thy precious health—an indirect method of having news of both of us. Not seeing me appear, they would suspect murder: you would be arrested, and—but stay—I am doing you injustice, in imagining you could be capable of such a crime. You have sacrificed more than a million of francs, to save your life, and you would risk your head for the silly and futile pleasure of killing me from revenge! Come, come, you are not so senseless as to commit yourself in that way!"

"It is because you know I cannot kill you, that you redouble all my sufferings, by thus exasperating them, by your sarcastic language."

"Your position is so extraordinary, you cannot judge yourself; but, on my honor, 'tis very singular!"

"Oh! misery! inextricable misery! Whichever way I turn, death is before me! And then, to think that which I most fear is annihilation! Curses on me! on you! and the whole world!"

"Your misanthropy is more extensive than your philanthropy; it takes in all the world, the other only a small district of this city."

"Go on! mock at me, monster!"

"Would you rather I should crush you with reproaches?"

"I?"

"Whose fault is it, that we are reduced to this position? 'Tis yours! Why should you have worn, bound, like a relic, round your neck, my letter relating to that murder which gave *you* three hundred thousand francs?—that murder which we had so adroitly passed off as a simple suicide?"

"Why did I so? Wretch! did I not give you fifty thousand francs for your coöperation in that crime, and for the letter which I demanded of you, that I might have a guaranty against you, and to prevent your having the power to destroy me? for thus, you could not have denounced me without inculpating yourself. My life and fortune, therefore, were bound up in that letter, and that was the reason I always carried it so carefully about me."

"That's true! 'Twas very skillful on your part, for then I could gain nothing by denouncing you, except the satisfaction of marching to the scaffold, side by side with you; and, notwithstanding, your great sagacity has lost us both, while mine had, until now, insured to us impunity for this crime."

"Impunity! You see——"

"Who could have foreseen what now has happened? But, in the ordinary course of things, our crime, thanks to me, ought to have been, and was unpunished."

"Thanks to you!"

"Yes; when we had blown out that man's brains, you would simply have counterfeited his handwriting, and have sent a letter to his sister, stating that, being completely ruined, he had killed himself, from despair. You thought to make a show of monstrous cunning, in not mentioning, in that fictitious letter, the amount he had deposited with you. This was absurd; the deposit being known to the sister of this man, she would necessarily have demanded its restitution. It was therefore necessary to speak of this deposit, in case doubts should have arisen as to the reality of the suicide. You would have been the last person in the world to be suspected. How could they imagine that, having killed a man, in order to retain a sum he had confided to you, you could be fool enough to mention, in the forged letter, this deposit? And what did happen consequently? They believed the suicide! Thanks to your reputation for probity, you were enabled to deny the receipt of such a sum, and they believed the brother killed himself, after having spent, in dissipation, the fortune of the sister."

"But of what consequence is all this now? the crime has been discovered."

"And, thanks to whom? Was it my fault if my letter was a weapon which cut two ways? Why were you weak enough, so much a simpleton, as to deliver up this terrible arm to that infernal Cecile?"

"Hold your peace! do not pronounce that name!" exclaimed Jacques Ferrand, with hideous terror.

"Be it so. I do not wish to drive you into an epileptic fit. You must clearly see, that calculating only upon the usual course of justice, our mutual precautions were sufficient. But the extraordinary measures of him who holds us in his irresistible grasp, takes a more certain course!"

"Oh! I know it but too well!"

"He thinks, that to deprive a criminal of his head does not sufficiently atone for the injuries he has done. With the proofs he now has in his hands, should he determine to deliver us to justice, what would result from that? Two bodies, neither more nor less, fit only to fatten a church-yard; that would not suffice for him."

"Tears, and agonies, and tortures, are what this Prince—this demon, requires. But I do not know him; I have never done him harm: why should he so obstinately pursue me?"

"Moreover, he pretends to feel the good or evil done to other men, whom he so innocently calls his brothers—and then he knows all those whom you have injured, and punishes you according to his system."

"By what right does he so?"

"Come, Jacques, between ourselves, let us not talk of right; he had the power judicially to cut off your head. What would have been the result? The only two relations that you had, are dead—the state would have seized upon your fortune, to the detriment of those you have despoiled. Now see the difference. By making your life the price of all your fortune, Morel, the lapidary, the father of Louise, whom you dishonored, is now, with all his family, secured from want. Madam de Fermont, the sister of de Remeville, the pretended suicide, regains her three hundred thousand francs. Germain, whom you had falsely accused of theft, is reinstated in the opinion of the world, and has given to him an honorable and well-secured position, at the head of this new Bank for the unemployed poor, which you have been compelled to found, to remedy and expiate the injuries you have done. Between villains, we may acknowledge so much to each other. But frankly, looking at this question as he does, who now holds us in his talons, society would have gained nothing by your death—it gains much by your life."

"And it is that which causes all my fury! but that is not my only torment."

"The Prince knows it well. And now, what will he decide with regard to us? I cannot divine it! He promised us, to spare our lives, if we should blindly execute his orders—he will keep his word. But should he think our crimes have not sufficiently been expiated, he will well know how to render death a thousand times more acceptable than the life he leaves to us. You do not know him! When he thinks he is called upon to be inexorable, there is no executioner more barbarous than he is. He must have had the devil at his orders, to have discovered what I had gone to do in Normandy. Besides, he has more than one demon at his service; for that Cecile—whom may the lightning blast!——"

"Again, I tell you, speak not of her! mention not that name—not that name!"

"Yes! yes! may the lightning blast the woman who bears that name! 'Tis she who has lost all. Our heads would be in safety on our shoulders, had it not been for your besotted passion for that creature."

Instead of flying into a passion, Jacques Ferrand replied in a tone of deep depression, "Do you know her? Tell me: did you ever see that woman?"

"Never! 'Tis said she is beautiful. I know it."

"Beautiful!" rejoined the notary, scornfully. "Hear me!" he added, with a degree of desperate bitterness. "Say no more—speak not of that you can know nothing of. Do not accuse me—what I have done, you would have done, had you been in my place."

"I place my life at the mercy of a woman!"

"Yes, of that one! Could I but hope again, that which I did once hope, I would do it again."

"By all the powers of hell! he is still under the spell!" exclaimed Polidori, astounded.

"Listen to me," said the notary, in a voice at once calm, low, and, as it were, now and then emphasized with bursts of incurable despair—"Listen! You know that I love gold—you know what I have braved to acquire it. To count, in thought, the sums that I possessed—to see them doubled by my avarice—to endure every privation, and to know that I was master of a treasure—this was my joy, my happiness! Yes! to possess—not to enjoy, but still to treasure up—that was my life! But a month ago, had I been told that I must choose to lose my fortune or my head, I would have given my head."

"What virtue is there in possession, then, if life is taken from you?"

"Ask me, then, what pleasure is there in possession, if we do not use that which we possess? When I was worth a million, did I lead the life of one possessed of so much wealth? No! I lived like a poor man. I wished to possess for the sole pleasure of possessing."

"But again I ask, what pleasure in possessing, if one dies?"

"To die while still possessing! to enjoy to the last moment that which has made you brave privations, infamy, the scaffold! yes! to say, even with one's head upon the block, *I do possess!* Yes, look you! death is sweet, compared to the torments one endures, to see yourself during life dispossessed, as I am, of all that I have amassed with so much difficulty—with so much danger! To say, each hour, each minute of the day, I, who had more than a million—I, who have endured the most painful privations to preserve, to augment that treasure—I, who in ten years hence would have doubled, trebled it—I—I have nothing left—nothing! It is too horrible! it is to die, not every day, but every minute of the day! Yes! to this dreadful agony, which may last for years and years, I should have a thousand times preferred a sudden and certain death, which should have struck me before an atom of that treasure had been torn from me. Again I say, I should have died still crying, 'I possess!'"

Polidori looked at his accomplice in profound amazement. "I can no longer understand you. Why, then, did you obey the orders of a man, who has only to say one word and your head falls? Why have you now preferred to live without your treasure, if life appears so horrible to you?"

"It is," said the notary, speaking lower and lower, "because to die, is no longer to think—to die, is to become nothing! And Cecile!"

"And you still hope?" cried Polidori, more and more amazed.

"I do not hope—I possess."

"What?"

"Remembrance."

"But you are never to see her again—and she has sacrificed your life."

"Yet I still love her, and more madly than before. For me to die!" exclaimed Jacques Ferrand, with a burst of tears and sobs, which contrasted strangely with the deathlike calmness of his previous words. "Yes!" rejoined he, "I still love her, and I will not die, that I may be able still to plunge and plunge again into that furnace which consumes me with its slow fire! for you do not know—that night—that night on which I saw her looking so beautiful, so impassioned, so infatuating—that night is always present to my memory. That voluptuous, but terrible picture, is there engraven—always there—there before my eyes! Let them be open, or closed by a feverish drowsiness, I always see her dark and burning glance, which makes the marrow boil within my bones! I always feel her breath upon my forehead! I always hear her voice!"

"But these are frightful torments!"

"Frightful! yes, frightful!—But death!—annihilation!—to lose for ever this remembrance, as living as the reality—to forego these remembrances which tear, which devour, which inflame me! No, no, no! Live! live—poor, despised, degraded—live in the galleys—but live! provided that thought remains to me—since this infernal being has all my thoughts—Cecile alone reigns in my mind!"

"Jacques," said Polidori, in a serious tone, which contrasted strangely with his habitual irony; "I have seen much suffering, but never tortures which can compare with yours. He who holds us in his power, could not be more merciless. He has condemned you to live, or rather to wait for death in terrible anguish; for what you have told me, explains the alarming symptoms which daily develope themselves in you—the cause of which I have searched for in vain."

"But there is nothing serious in these symptoms; I am suffering from exhaustion, and from the reaction of my sorrows. I am not in danger, am I?"

"No, no! but your symptoms are quite serious; you must not aggravate them. There are certain thoughts which you must banish, or you expose yourself to great danger."

"I will do any thing that you direct, provided it can save my life, for I do not wish to die. The priests speak of the damned—never could a torture be devised for them, equal to what I endure. Assailed by passion and avarice, I have two living wounds instead of one, and I suffer from both, equally. The loss of my fortune is a terrible blow; but death would be awful! I wish to live, although life should be an incessant torment! I dare not call for death, for death would annihilate my fatal happiness—that mirror of my thoughts, in which Cecile is ever present."

"You have, at least, the consolation," said Polidori, resuming his habitual irony, "of thinking of the good which you have done in expiation of your crimes."

"Yes: rail on! rail on! turn me over on the burning coals. You know very well, miserable wretch! that I detest mankind; you know that these expiations which are extorted from me, and in which a weak mind might find consolation, inspire me with hatred and rage against those who have forced them upon me, and against those also, who profit by them. Thunder and murder! the thought, that while I am dragging on a frightful existence, having my soul and body held together only that I may be the prey of tortures which would daunt the most intrepid—the man whom I abhor and despise will live in happiness upon the property which has been forced from me; that widow and her daughter will bless God for the three hundred thousand francs which I have returned; that Morel and his daughter, will live in comfort and ease; that Germain will be raised to an honorable and secure position; and that priest, who blessed me while my heart was swimming in gall and in blood, I could have stabbed with ecstacy! It is too overpowering! My head will burst at last," said he, leaning his forehead on his hands, convulsively clenched. "My ideas wander in darkness; I can no longer resist these fits of powerless rage—these torments for ever present—for ever renewing their strength—and all for you! for you, Cecile! Cecile! Do you know? do you ever think of the torments I endure, demon fresh from hell?"

And Jacques Ferrand, exhausted by the burst of frantic excitement, fell back upon his seat, uttering deep and inarticulate groans. This paroxysm of convulsive and desperate rage did not astonish Polidori. Endowed with superior mind, and possessing thorough medical knowledge, he saw clearly that the rage of the notary, in being compelled to disgorge his blood-stained gold, combined with his frenzy for the voluptuous being who had been his avenging fury, had kindled within his miserable frame a devouring and inextinguishable fever. Nor was this all: Polidori discovered in the symptoms which assailed Jacques Ferrand, the sure indications of one of the most horrible forms of disease which has ever afflicted humanity—a disease which those severe moralists and profound observers, Paulus and Aretee, have so wonderfully traced the terrifying picture.

A sudden knock was now heard at the door of the study.

"Jacques," said Polidori to the notary, "Jacques, recover yourself; some one is coming."

The notary did not hear the appeal. Half-reclined upon his desk, he was twisting about in a convulsive spasm. The physician opened the door, and discovered the principal clerk of the office, who with a pale and agitated countenance, exclaimed, "I must instantly speak to Mr. Ferrand."

"Silence! he is at this moment very unwell, and cannot attend to you," said Polidori in a low voice: and leaving the study he closed the door behind him.

"Ah, sir; you are Mr. Ferrand's best friend. Come to his aid; there is not a moment to be lost."

"What do you mean?"

"According to the orders of Mr. Ferrand, I waited upon the Countess McGregor, to inform her that it was impossible for him to visit her to-day as she had desired."

"Well?"

"That lady, who appears now out of danger, asked me into her chamber. She exclaimed, in a threatening tone: 'Return, and tell Mr. Ferrand that if he is not here within half an hour, I shall have him arrested for forgery before the day closes; for the child whom he has pretended to be dead, is alive. I know to whom he surrendered her, and I know also where she now is.'"*

"The woman was mad," replied Polidori, coolly shrugging his shoulders.

"Do you think so, sir?"

"I am convinced of it."

"I supposed so at first, but the collected manner of the Countess dissipated my suspicion."

"Her head has doubtless been weakened by her sickness, and the visionary always believe in their dreams."

"You are probably correct, sir; for I could not explain to myself the threats of the Countess against a man so respectable as Mr. Ferrand."

"There is no reason whatever in her accusations."

"I must also inform you, that when I was leaving the chamber of the Countess, one of her servants entered quickly the room, saying: 'His Highness will be here within an hour.'"

"Did the woman say that?" exclaimed Polidori.

"Yes, sir; and I was very much astonished, ignorant of what Highness she alluded to."

"There can be no doubt that it is the Prince," said Polidori to himself. "He with the Countess Sarah, whom he had determined never to see again! I cannot divine the reason of this visit, but I do not like it. Our situation will not be improved;" and addressing the clerk, he added: "Be assured, sir, there is nothing serious in this. It is the diseased fancy of a sick person. I will, however, impart to Mr. Ferrand all that you have communicated to me."

CHAPTER IV..... RODOLPHE AND SARAH.

We will now conduct the reader to the house of the Countess McGregor, who had just passed a crisis of delirium and suffering, which had alarmed the fears of every one, respecting her life. The sun was beginning to decline; Sarah was seated in a large fauteuil, and, supported by her brother, Thomas Seyton, was examining herself, with close attention, in a mirror which one of the servants, kneeling, held before her. The scene occurred in the room where Chouette had committed her attempt at assassination. The marble paleness of the Countess was rendered still more striking, by the deep black of her eyes and hair. A long white dress of muslin enveloped her form.

"Give me the bandeau of pearls," said she to one of her women, in a feeble but imperious tone.

"Let Betty tie it for you, you will only fatigue yourself; you have already been sufficiently imprudent——"

"The bandeau! the bandeau!" said Sarah, impatiently, who arranged the ornament upon her forehead according to her taste. "Now clasp it, and leave me," said she to her maids. As they were retiring, she added, "Let Mr. Ferrand, the notary, be con-

* The reader is aware, that Sarah supposed that Fleur de Marie was still imprisoned in Saint Lazare, as Chouette had informed her before stabbing her.

ducted to the small blue parlor." Then she added, with an expression of pride which was ill dissembled, "When His Highness, the Grand Duke of Gerolstein arrives, introduce him here. At last," she said, when left alone, throwing herself back in the chair, "at last, I touch the crown, the dream of my life: the prediction will be fulfilled."

"Calm your excitement," said her brother, severely; "even yesterday, your life was despaired of; a disappointment might inflict a fatal blow."

"You are right; the blow would be awful, for I never was so near the consummation of my hopes. I am now certain of the attainment; what has sustained me from sinking under my sufferings, has been the constant thought, that I should profit by the important disclosure which that woman made at the time she wounded me."

"While you were delirious, your mind constantly reverted to the same thought."

"Because that thought alone sustained my endangered life. What a prospect! a sovereign princess! almost a queen!" added she with rapture.

"I entreat you, once more, not to cherish these idle dreams; the awakening will be terrible."

"Idle dreams! When Rodolphe shall know, that this young girl, now a prisoner at Saint Lazare, and formerly confided to the notary, who forged a certificate of her death, is actually our child, do you believe that——"

Seyton interrupted his sister: "I believe that princes make natural obligations yield, invariably, to reasons of state, and political considerations."

"Have you such little confidence in my skill?"

"The Prince is no longer the artless and passionate young man, whom you formerly allured; that season has passed for him, and for you, also, my sister."

"Do you know why I wished to adorn my head with this pearl bandeau? why I have clothed myself in this white dress? It is because that, the first time Rodolphe saw me at the Court of Gerolstein, I was dressed in white, and wore this same bandeau upon my head."

"Is it possible," said Thomas Seyton, with surprise, "that you wish to recall those remembrances? Do you not, on the contrary, fear their influence?"

"I am better acquainted with Rodolphe than you are. My features, changed by age and suffering, are certainly no longer the same with those of the young girl he so fondly loved—the only one he ever loved—the only one, for I was the first; and that love always leaves ineffaceable traces upon the heart of man. You may rest assured, my brother, that the sight of this dress, will not only recall to the mind of the Prince the recollection of his love, but also that of his youth; and with men, these early associations are always delightful and precious."

"But heart-rending thoughts are joined with these pleasant memories; the melancholy termination of your love, the odious conduct of the Prince's father toward you, your obstinate silence, when, after your marriage with Count McGregor, Rodolphe demanded your daughter, at that time quite a child—your daughter, of whose death you informed him ten years ago, by means of a letter couched in the most freezing terms. Can you forget that, from that time, the Prince has been touched by no feelings but contempt and hatred for you."

"Hatred has yielded to compassion; since he has heard of my wound, he has daily dispatched the Baron de Graün to inquire respecting my health."

"It was a mere dictate of humanity."

"He has this moment informed me that he would visit me; the concession is immense."

"He believes that you are near the grave, and he comes for a final farewell. You were wrong not to convey, by letter, the revelation you are about to make."

"I have my reasons for acting in this manner. The disclosure will fill him with surprise and joy, and I shall be with him to take advantage of his first emotions. Yes; to-day, or never, he must say to me, 'Marriage must legitimatize the birth of our child.' If he says so, his word is sacred, and the object of my life is attained."

"Yes, it will be, if he makes that promise to you."

"Nothing must be neglected to draw that promise from him, at this important crisis. I know that Rodolphe hates me, although I cannot divine the motive of his hatred, for I have never failed toward him, in the part which I imposed upon myself."

"Perhaps you have; for he is not a man that hates without reason."

"No matter; once assured that his daughter is found, he will overcome his aversion for me; he will not shrink from any sacrifice to insure to his child the inheritance and destiny to which she is entitled; to render her as happy as she has been thus far miserable."

"He may, perhaps, assure to his daughter the most brilliant rank; but between that reparation and the resolution of marrying you, in order to legitimatize the birth of the child, there is an abyss."

"His paternal love will fill that abyss."

"But the unfortunate girl has, doubtless, thus far lived in an abject and wretched situation."

"Rodolphe will be the more anxious to elevate her, on account of her past degradation."

"But, think of it; would he permit her to assume her place among the sovereign families of Europe? would he acknowledge her as a daughter, in the presence of those kings of whom he is either a relation or an ally?"

"Do you not know his singular, imperious and resolute character;—his chivalric exaggeration of all that he regards as an obligation of justice or duty?"

"But this poor child has, perhaps, been so situated by the misery in which she has lived, that the Prince, perhaps, instead of feeling an attraction toward her——"

"What do you say?" exclaimed Sarah, interrupting her brother; "is she not as beautiful a girl, as she was lovely as a child? Has not Rodolphe, without knowing her relationship, taken so much interest in her as to charge himself with her future support? Has he not already sent her to Bouqueval farm, whence we removed her?"

"Yes; thanks to your obstinate determination to sever all the ties of affection, which bound the Prince, in the idle hope of drawing him for consolation to you."

"And yet, if I had not indulged that hope, I should not have discovered, at the risk of my life, the secret of my daughter's existence! Was it not by means of that woman, who took her from the farm, that I learned the base deceit which Jacques Ferrand, the notary, practiced upon me?"

"It is unfortunate that I was refused admittance this morning to Saint Lazare, where, it is said, that unfortunate child now is. In spite of my earnest intreaties, they would not answer any of the inquiries which I made, because I had no letter of introduction to the director of the prison. I have written to the prefect, in your name, but I shall probably have no answer until to-morrow; and the Prince will be here now soon, and I regret once more, that you are unable to present to him your daughter with your own hands. It would have been better to have waited until we removed her from the prison, before sending for the Grand Duke."

"To wait: have we any certainty that my health will continue as it now is until to-morrow? perhaps I am only sustained by the energy of my ambition."

"But what proof will you present to the Prince? Will he believe you?"

"He will believe me when he reads the commencement of the revelation, which I was writing under the dictation of that woman, when she stabbed me—a revelation, of which I have not forgotten a single circumstance. He will believe me when he reads your correspondence with Jacques Ferrand and Madam Seraphin, up to the supposed death of the child. He will believe me when he hears the confession of the notary, who, frightened by my threats, will soon be here. He will believe me, when he sees the portrait of my daughter, taken at the age of four, to which, even now, as that woman said, she still bears a striking resemblance. These proofs will suffice to convince the Prince, that I tell the truth; and to prompt in his mind that impulse, which will make me a queen. Were it only attained for one day, for one hour, I should die happy."

At this moment, the noise of a carriage was heard entering the court.

"It is he! it is Rodolphe!" exclaimed Sarah, addressing Thomas Seyton.

He approached quickly a curtain, raised it and said, "Yes, it is the Prince; he is descending from the carriage."

"Leave me alone. Now is the decisive moment," said Sarah, with extraordinary composure; for an unnatural ambition, merciless and selfish, had always been her sole motive of action. In the almost miraculous reappearance of her daughter, she discerned nothing but a new facility for attaining the end of her aspirations. After hesitating whether he should leave the room, Thomas Seyton suddenly approached his sister, and said: "I must be the one to inform the Prince, by what means your daughter, whom we supposed dead, has been saved. Such conversation would be too dangerous for you; a violent emotion would kill you; and after so long a separation, the sight of the

Prince, the recollection of the past, will be dangerous in your present situation."

"Give me your hand, brother," said Sarah; and placing the hand upon her impassable heart, she added, with a cold and gloomy smile: "Am I moved?"

"No, not in the least; not the smallest precipitation of pulse," said Sayton, with surprise. "I know your powers of self-control, but at a moment when a crown or death is before you, your calmness confounds me. The disappointment of this last hope would be fatal."

"Why this surprise, my brother? You know that nothing—nothing—can hurry the throbs of this marble heart. It will only palpitate, when I place upon my brow a sovereign crown. I hear Rodolphe; leave me."

"But——"

"Leave me," exclaimed Sarah, in a tone so imperious and resolute, that her brother left the apartment, a moment before the Prince was introduced.

When Rodolphe entered the parlor, his look indicated deep compassion; but on seeing Sarah, seated in her fauteuil, and decked in such a studied manner, he started back, and his countenance immediately assumed a dark and mistrustful expression. The Countess divining his thoughts, said to him in a mild and feeble tone: "You expected to find me dying, and came to receive my last farewell."

"I have always regarded as sacred, the last wishes of those who are about to leave this world; but if a sacrilegious deceit is practiced——"

"Be assured that I have not deceived you. I have, I believe, a few hours to live. Pardon, I beseech you, a final caprice. I wished to spare you the gloomy habiliments of the death-bed. I wished to die arrayed as when I first saw you. After 17 years' separation, I meet you once more. Thank you! Oh, thank you! And do you, in your turn, render thanks to God, for having moved you, to grant my last request. Had you refused me, I should have carried with me to the grave a secret, which will constitute the joy, the happiness of your life—a joy, to be sure, mingled with its tears, as every human felicity is—but you would purchase that felicity, with half of the remaining days of your life."

"What do you mean?" asked the Prince, with surprise.

"Yes, Rodolphe; if you had not visited me, this secret would have been buried in my tomb. It would have been my only vengeance; and yet, I fear, that courage would have deserted me. Although I have suffered much from your hands, I should have shared with you that supreme happiness, which is in reserve for you for a long period—a very long period, I hope."

"But what do you mean, madam?"

"When you know it, you will be unable to comprehend my delay, in imparting the information to you, for you will regard the revelation as a miracle of Heaven. But, how strange it is, that I, who with one word, can pour into your soul a piness it never knew before, should feel, although my ounds are numbered, an indescribable happiness in delaying your expectation; and besides, I know your heart, and in spite of the firmness of your character, I fear to announce to you without preparation, such an incredible discovery. Emotions of sudden joy have also their dangers."

"Your pallor increases; you can hardly restrain your violent agitation," said Rodolphe; "I believe that this scene is grave and solemn."

"Grave and solemn," added Sarah, with a voice tremulous with emotion; for, in spite of her usual composure, while thinking of the immense importance of the revelation she was about to make, she felt more agitated than she had anticipated. After a moment's silence, the Countess, being unable any longer to restrain her emotions, exclaimed:

"Rodolphe, our daughter lives!"

"Our daughter!"

"She lives!"

These words, the accent of truth in which they were uttered, reached the heart of the Prince. "Our child? my daughter?" he repeated, approaching hastily the fauteuil of Sarah.

"She is not dead. I have the most conclusive proofs of the fact. To-morrow you shall see her."

"My daughter! my daughter!" exclaimed Rodolphe, scarcely able to conceive the possibility of the disclosure: "can it be that she still lives?" Then, suddenly reflecting upon the improbability of the event, and fearing that he might be attacked by some new deception, he exclaimed, "No! no! it must be a dream! You are deceiving me! it is a stratagem! an unworthy lie!"

"Hear me, Rodolphe."

"No; I am aware of your ambition: I know of what you are capable, and I divine the purpose of this deceit."

"You speak truly; I am capable of everything. Yes, I did intend to deceive you; a few days before I was mortally wounded, I desired to find a young girl, to present to you as our child, whose loss you regretted so bitterly."

"Enough, madam! enough!"

"After this confession, perhaps you will believe me; or, at any rate, you will be compelled to submit to evidence.

"To evidence!"

"Yes, Rodolphe, I repeat it, I did wish to deceive you; I desired to substitute an obscure young girl, in the place of the one for whom your tears flow; but God ordained that, at the moment when I was in the act of taking this sacrilegious step, I should receive a fatal blow."

"You! at that moment!"

"It was the will of God that, for the purpose of practicing this deception, there should be proposed me—do you know who?—our daughter."

"In the name of Heaven!—are you delirious?"

"I am not delirious, Rodolphe. In that casket, containing papers, and a portrait, which will prove the truth of my assertions, you will also find a memorandum, stained with my blood."

"With your blood?"

"The woman who told me that our daughter still lives, was dictating to me that revelation, when she stabbed me with a dagger."

"And who was she? How did she know?"

"It was to her that our daughter was intrusted, after it was pretended that she was dead."

"But who is this woman? what is her name? can she be believed? where did you form an acquaintance with her?"

"I tell you, Rodolphe, that the hand of Providence is to be clearly seen in the discovery. A few months ago, you rescued a young child from misery and provided her with a refuge in the country; did you not?"

"Yes; at Bouqueval."

"Jealousy and hatred distracted me. I caused this young girl to be taken from that farm, by the woman of whom I speak."

"And the poor child was conveyed to Saint Lazare."

"Where she now is."

"She is no longer there. You are not aware of the frightful evil of which you have been the cause, in tearing the poor child from the retreat where I placed her; but——"

"Is that young girl no longer at Saint Lazare? and do you speak of an awful calamity?"

"A monster of cupidity was goaded by selfishness to accomplish her destruction: he has drowned her. But answer me; you said that——"

"My daughter!" burst from the lips of Sarah, as she raised herself upright, and stood immovable as a marble statue.

"What do you say? Good God!" cried Rodolphe.

"My daughter!" exclaimed Sarah, with a face livid with fear and distorted with despair; "they have killed my daughter!"

"Goualeuse your daughter!" repeated Rodolphe, shrinking from the unfortunate woman with horror.

"Goualeuse! yes, yes; that is the name which the hag Chouette told me. Dead! dead!" continued Sarah, still immovable in her statuesque position. "Have they murdered her?"

"Sarah, recover yourself," continued Rodolphe, as pale and agitated as the Countess. "Answer me: was Goualeuse, the girl whom Chouette, instigated by you, tore from the Bouqueval farm——"

"My daughter! our daughter!"

"She!!"

"And they have murdered her!"

"Oh, no, no! you are still delirious; it cannot be! You do not know—you cannot conceive what frightful woe such an identity would entail upon you. Recover, I beseech you. Speak in a quiet tone, and let me hear you tell calmly this sad tale. We are frequently deceived by appearances, by fancied resemblance: we are always inclined to believe what we wish to be true. I do not address reproaches to you; but tell me, clearly and calmly, the reasons which have induced you to adopt this belief. The fact cannot be true; it ought not—it must not be!"

After a moment's pause, the Countess collected her thoughts, and said to Rodolphe, in a feeble voice: "After I heard of your marriage, I determined to marry myself. It was, therefore impossible to keep my daughter, as that time your love for me."

"But at that time, I most earnestly entreated, you might be spared, that you would commit her to my care. My letters remained unanswered: the only one which I received informed her death."

"I wished to revenge myself for your contempt, by refusing

your child. It was a base act, I confess it, for my moments are numbered: this last blow kills me."

"No, no! I do not believe you—I will not believe you! Goualeuse my daughter? would God have permitted such an affliction?"

"Hear me, I say! When she was four years old, my brother intrusted her to Madam Seraphin, the widow of an old servant of his own, that she might take care of the child until she had reached a sufficient age to be sent to a boarding-school. The sum intended for her support, was deposited by my brother in the hands of a notary renowned for his probity. The letters of that man and of Madam Seraphin, addressed at that time to me and my brother, are in that casket there. Within a year, they informed me that the health of my child was declining; and eight months after that, they informed me that she was dead, and sent me a certificate of her death. About the same time, Madam Seraphin entered the service of Jacques Ferrand, after having delivered our daughter to Chouette, by the hands of an outcast now confined in the bagnio at Rochefort. I was writing down this declaration of Chouette, when she stabbed me. The paper is there, with the portrait of our daughter, taken when she was four years old. Examine everything—letters, papers, portrait, declaration; and you, who have seen the poor child, can judge."

After these words, which entirely exhausted her strength, she fell fainting into her chair.

Rodolphe remained astonished at this disclosure. There are misfortunes so unforeseen, so overpowering, that we refuse to admit their certainty, although forced thereto by the most conclusive and irresistible evidence. Persuaded as the Prince was, of the death of Fleur de Marie, but one hope sustained the unhappy father, which was to convince himself that she was not his daughter. With an unnatural calmness, which frightened Sarah, he approached the table, opened the casket, and commenced reading the letters, one by one, and examining with the most scrutinizing attention the papers which accompanied them. Those letters, upon which the postmark was stamped, written by the notary and his accomplice, to the Countess and her brother, related to the childhood of Fleur de Marie, and to the investment of the funds designed for her support. Rodolphe could not doubt the authenticity of this correspondence. The declaration of Chouette, was confirmed by the information of which we have spoken at the commencement of this narrative; information collected by the commands of Rodolphe, and which pointed out Pierre Tournemine—a galley slave at Rochefort—as the individual who had received Fleur de Marie, from the hands of Madam Seraphin, to deliver her to Chouette. The unfortunate child had herself identified this woman as the torment of her infancy at the *tapis-franc* of the ogress. Rodolphe could no longer doubt the truth of what the Countess alleged, concerning these individuals. The certificate of death appeared perfectly formal; but Ferrand had himself confessed to Cecile, that a forged certificate of death had been the means by which he had obtained a large sum of money, which was settled as an annuity upon a young girl, whom he had caused to be drowned by Nicholas Martial, at the island of the Ravageur. It was, therefore, with increasing and fearful anguish that the terrible conviction dawned upon Rodolphe's mind, that Goualeuse was his daughter, and that she no longer lived. Everything confirmed this fatal certainty.

Before condemning Jacques Ferrand, upon the evidence furnished by himself to Cecile, the Prince, in his lively interest for Goualeuse, had sent to Asnières for information; and had learned, in substance, that two women—the one old, and the other young—had been drowned in the Seine, while going to the island of the Ravageur, and that public report accused the Martials of this new crime.

We must finally state, that, in spite of the cares of Doctor Griffon, the Count de Saint Remy and Louve, Fleur de Marie, whose life had been for a long time despaired of, was just becoming convalescent; and that the feeble condition of both her body and mind was such, that she had not been able to inform Rodolphe or Madam George, of her situation. This concurrence of circumstances left not the least hope to the Prince. A final trial was reserved; he cast his eyes upon the portrait, which he had feared to look at, and the blow was terrible. In that infantine and charming face, already radiant with the divine beauty of a cherub, he found the identical countenance of Fleur de Marie. Her finely delineated nose; her noble forehead; her small mouth, already sad; for Madam Seraphin had said to Sarah, in one of the letters which Rodolphe had just read: "The child asks incessantly for her mother, and is very melancholy." There were those large and lovely eyes of blue—"as blue as blue bells"—as Chouette had said to Sarah, when the hag recognized in the miniature, the features of the poor child, whose infancy she had persecuted, under the name of Pegriotte.

At the sight of this portrait, the violent and tumultuous feelings of Rodolphe were smothered by his tears. He sunk back in his chair, overwhelmed; buried his face in his hands, and sobbed violently.

CHAPTER V.....VENGEANCE.

While Rodolphe was weeping, the features of the Countess were convulsed. At the very moment when she expected that the dream of her ambitious life would become a reality, the last ray of hope, which had thus far sustained her, was extinguished for ever. This sudden disappointment reacted mortally upon her health, which was temporarily restored. The Countess waited with fear the first word of Rodolphe, sunk in her chair agitated with a nervous tremor, her hands clasped upon her knees, her eyes fixed. Well aware of the impetuosity of the Prince's character, she expected that a violent burst of passion would succeed the paroxysm of grief, which now convulsed the frame of the resolute and inflexible man. Rodolphe suddenly raised his head, wiped the tears from his eyes, stood erect, and approaching Sarah, with his arms crossed upon his breast, in a threatening and merciless manner, looked upon her for a moment, in silence; and then said, in a deep voice:

"It was so ordained: I drew my sword against my father, and I meet, in my child, the just punishment of a parricide! Hear me, madam."

"You a parricide! Gracious God! what a fatal day! What new wo can you disclose?"

"You must hear, in these last moments of your life, all the evils, all the calamities, and the remorse, which your implacable ambition, your hardened selfishness, has caused. Hear me, heartless and faithless woman! Unnatural mother! hear me!"

"Mercy, Rodolphe! mercy!"

"There is no mercy for you, who, moved by no pity for a sincere love, while affecting to partake it, sacrificed it to your inhuman selfishness and execrable pride;—no mercy for you, who armed the son against the father;—no mercy for you who, instead of hanging, with the tenderest devotion, over the infancy of your child, abandoned her to mercenary hands, thus preferring a rich marriage, to the comfort, virtue and life, of your offspring, as you had formerly preferred your ungovernable ambition to the most sacred ties;—no mercy for you, who, having first refused to surrender my child to my yearning affection, have just murdered her by your sacrilegious guilt. May curses light upon your head! evil genius of myself and my race!"

"Good God! he cannot be reached by compassion! Leave me! leave me!"

"I will compel you to listen. Do you remember the last day I saw you, seventeen years ago? You could no longer conceal the consequences of our secret union, which, like yourself, I considered indissoluble. I knew the inflexible character of my father. I knew what political alliance he expected to accomplish by my marriage. I braved his indignation, and declared to him that you were my wife before God and before men, and that you soon would become a mother. The rage of my father knew no bounds. He would not believe in our marriage. Such an extent of audacity appeared to him impossible. He threatened me with his severest indignation, if I presumed to mention the folly to him. I loved you most truly, most passionately; a dupe of the arts you practiced upon me. I thought that your marble heart had beaten kindly for me, and I replied to my father that I never would receive another wife. At these words, his anger became ungovernable. He poured the most insulting epithets upon you. He exclaimed, that our marriage was void; that to punish you for your audacity, he would place you in the pillory. Yielding to my passion, and to the vehemence of my character, I dared to forbid my father, my sovereign, to use such language toward my wife. I dared to threaten him. Exasperated by the insult, my father raised his hand against me. Blind by the excess of rage, I drew my sword, and rushed upon him. Had it not been for the interference of Sir Walter Murph, who arrested the blow, I should have been a parricide in fact, as I was already in intention. Do you hear? a parricide in your defence!"

"Alas! alas! I was ignorant of that misfortune!"

"In vain I have thus far attempted to expiate my crime; the blow which has reached my heart to-day is my punishment."

"But I! have not I suffered much from the harshness of your father, who broke our marriage! Why do you accuse me of not having loved you, when——"

"Why?" exclaimed Rodolphe, interrupting Sarah, and casting upon her a look of withering contempt. "Learn the reason

then, and be no longer astonished, at the horror which you inspire, after that fatal scene in which I had threatened my father. I surrendered my sword. I was imprisoned secretly. Polidori, by whose agency our marriage had been performed, was arrested. He proved that the union was null, for that the clergyman who officiated was not authorized to act—was not a clergyman—and that you, your brother and myself, had all been deceived. To disarm my father's wrath, Polidori did more. He delivered one of your letters to your brother, which had been intercepted during Seyton's journey."

"Heavens! is it possible!"

"Do you now understand the reason of my contempt?"

"Enough! enough!"

"In that letter you unveiled your ambitious projects, with most revolting impudence. You treated me with cold scorn. You sacrificed me to your infernal pride. I was only the instrument of the royal destiny which had been predicted for you. In short, you complained in it, of 'the long life of my father!'"

"Wretch that I am, at this hour I understand everything!"

"And, in order to defend you, I had threatened the life of my father! When on the next day, without addressing me a single reproach, he showed me that letter, each line of which revealed the blackness of your soul, I could only fall upon my knees before him, and beg for mercy. From that day I have been pursued by unceasing remorse. I soon left Germany for a long voyage, and then I commenced the expiation which I had imposed upon myself, and which will end only with my life; to reward the good, to punish the wicked; to comfort those who suffer; to fathom all the wounds of humanity, in order to tear some soul from perdition. Such is the task which I have imposed upon myself."

"It is a noble and holy task: it is worthy of you."

"If I speak to you of that vow," replied Rodolphe, with bitter disdain—"of that vow, which I have fulfilled to the extent of my ability, wherever I have been, it is not to solicit for it your praise. Hear me. I arrived recently in France. My residence in this country was not to be lost for the purposes of expiation. In my desire to assist unfortunate but honest people, I also wished to become acquainted with those classes who are overpowered by poverty, and reduced to a state of brutal depravity. Knowing as I do, that succor administered in a seasonable moment, that a few generous words even, are sufficient to save an unfortunate man from the abyss of woe, I wished to judge by personal observation. I therefore affected the dress and language of those I wished to observe. It was in one of these expeditions, that, for the first time, I—I met——" Then, as if shrinking from the terrible disclosure, Rodolphe, after a moment's hesitation, added, "No, no! I have not the courage."

"What more have you to tell me? Good Heaven!"

"You will know it too soon; but," added he, with bitter irony, "you seem to be so much interested in past events, that I must speak of those which preceded my return to France. After long voyages, I finally arrived in Germany, and hastened to obey the will of my father. I married a Prussian princess. During my absence, you had been expelled from the Grand Duchy. Hearing that you were married to the Count McGregor, I earnestly entreated you for my daughter. You would not answer me; and notwithstanding all my inquiries, I never could learn to whose hands you had committed that poor child, for whom my father had liberally provided. Ten years since, a letter from you informed me that our daughter was dead. Alas! would to God she had died then! I should have been spared from the incurable grief, which will henceforth torture my life."

"Now," said Sarah, in a feeble voice, "I am no longer astonished at the aversion with which I have inspired you: the perusal of that letter explains it all. I feel that I cannot survive this last blow. Yes; I confess that pride and ambition have ruined me. Under a passionate exterior, I concealed an icy heart; I affected devotion and frankness, while filled with dissimulation and selfishness. Ignorant of the numerous reasons you had for despising and hating me, my rash hopes revived in all their strength. Since widowhood had disengaged us both, my faith in the prediction which promised me a crown, was restored; and when chance disclosed to me the existence of my daughter, I thought I saw in it a providential interference. Yes; I went so far as to believe that your aversion to me would yield to your love for your child, and that you would give me your hand, in order to restore to her the rank to which she is entitled."

"Let your cruel ambition then be gratified, and at the same time punished! Yes, notwithstanding the horror with which you inspire me! from pity, from respect for the awful misfortunes of my offspring, I should have legitimatized the birth of our daughter by a marriage, although determined to live for ever separated from you, in order that her situation might in future, be as elevated and brilliant, as it had been miserable and degraded in the past."

"I was not then, deceived. But wo, wo to me! it is now too late!"

"Oh! I know it: it is not the death of your daughter which you lament; it is the loss of that rank which you have pursued with such inflexible perseverance. Let those infamous regrets be your final punishment."

"The final! for I cannot survive it."

"But before you die, you shall learn to what an existence your unnatural abandonment of your daughter condemned her."

"Poor child! very miserable, doubtless."

"Do you remember," said Rodolphe, with fearful composure, "do you remember that evening, when you and your brother followed me to that den of the Cité?"

"I do remember! but why that question? your look chills me."

"While going to that haunt, did you not observe in the corners of those streets, miserable creatures who—— But I dare not speak it," said Rodolphe, hiding his face in his hands: "my own words inspire me with horror!"

"They inspire me with horror, also! What remains to be told?"

"You have seen them," said Rodolphe, with extraordinary effort; "you have seen those females—the shame of their sex. Well: among them, did you observe a young girl of sixteen, beautiful—yes, beautiful as angels are painted!—a poor child, who, in the midst of the degradation in which, for several weeks, she had been plunged, preserved still, a countenance so virginal, so innocent, so pure, that the thieves and murderers, who treated her with familiarity, madam, had given her the surname of 'Fleur de Marie!' Did you notice that young girl, affectionate mother? tell me!"

"No: I did not notice her," said Sarah, almost unwittingly oppressed with a vague terror.

"Truly!" exclaimed Rodolphe, with a sardonic expression, "'tis very strange. I noticed her, and I will tell you the occasion. Listen to me: upon one of those expeditions to which I have already alluded, and which, then, had a complex purpose, I found myself in the Cité, not far from that haunt to which you followed me. A man was beating one of those unfortunate creatures; I protected her against her brutal oppressor. Do you imagine who that creature was? tell me, kind and devoted mother! tell me! Can you not imagine?"

"No: I cannot imagine. Oh! leave me! leave me!"

"That unfortunate female was Fleur de Marie!"

"Good God!"

"And do you not imagine who Fleur de Marie was, irreproachable mother?"

"Kill me! kill me at once!"

"It was Goualeuse! it was your daughter!" exclaimed Rodolphe, with a frightful burst of grief and indignation. "Yes: that unfortunate female, whom I rescued from the hands of a galley slave, was my own child!—the daughter of Rodolphe, of Gerolstein! Oh! there was in that encounter with my child, whom I saved, without knowing that my blood swelled in her veins, something fatal, something Providential—a recompense to the man who seeks to succor his brethren—a punishment for the parricide!"

"I die cursed and damned!" murmured Sarah, falling back in her arm-chair, and burying her face in her hands.

"When I rescued her from the ill-treatment with which she was threatened," continued Rodolphe, hardly suppressing his feelings, and unable to restrain the sobs which smothered his voice, "struck by the uncommon sweetness of her accent, the angel-like expression of her features, it was impossible for me to withhold my interest from her; for, with what deep emotion I listened to her touching recital of a life of abandoned misery and guilt!—for, madam, the life you condemned your daughter to lead, passes beyond the most frightful visions of your imagination! Yes, yes; you must be informed of the tortures of your child! While surrounded by opulence, you were dreaming of a crown, your almost infant daughter, only protected from the air by the rags which scarcely covered her nakedness, was a beggar in the streets, pinched with cold, almost famished with hunger. During the winter nights, she was shut in with a handful of straw, in a corner of a garret; and when the female nurse was fatigued with beating *our* child, she drew upon her imagination for new tortures! Can you conceive the torment which she devised? She pulled out our daughter's teeth!"

"Would to Heaven I could die! I cannot endure this agony!"

"Hear me again! Escaping finally from the hands of Chouette, wandering, without food and shelter, at the tender age of

eight years, she was arrested as a vagrant, and sent to prison. Ah! that was the happiest period of your daughter's life! Yes, in her jail she praised God that she suffered no longer from cold and hunger, and that she was no longer beaten. It was in a prison that she passed the most precious years of a young woman's life; those years during which a tender mother lavishes upon her daughter all that anxiety and affection can dictate; yes, instead of reaching her sixteenth year, encircled in protecting arms, imbued with the holiest counsel, washed with tears, your daughter encountered only the stern glances, or the cold indifference of jailers. Thus nursed in infancy, thus educated in childhood, she was finally cast out, into the misery and pollution of a large city. Unfortunate child! abandoned, friendless, with no eye to watch over her, no voice to counsel, no arm to defend, a prey to all the temptations which vice can present. Oh!" exclaimed Rodolphe, giving free course to the sobs which choked his utterance, "your heart is marble, your selfishness merciless, your eyes dry! but you, even you, would have wept, in hearing the distressing recital of her tortured infancy, and wretched childhood, from the lips of your daughter! Poor child! soiled, but never corrupted; chaste even in the midst of that horrible degradation, which seemed to her like a frightful dream; for each word, tone, look, betrayed her instinctive horror of a life to which she was fatally enchained. If you knew what holy instincts her language revealed; what kindness, what charity:—yes, for it was to relieve misfortunes greater than her own, that the poor child expended the last money she possessed, which might have saved her from the abyss of infamy. But the day finally came—the day of distress which could be no longer borne—when, without food, without shelter, harpies met her, feeble, hungry, and drowned her senses in brandy!" Rodolphe could not finish the tale. A distressing cry burst from his heart as he exclaimed, "Alas! she was my daughter!—my only daughter!"

"A curse will rest upon me!" muttered Sarah, burying her face in her hands, as if she feared to see the light.

"Yes; curses on you! for your inhuman abandonment of your child produced these accumulated horrors! Curses on you! for when, rescuing her from that infamy, I placed her in a peaceful retreat, you caused her to be torn from it by the infamous accomplices of your guilt. Curses upon you! for your act placed her again in the power of that wretch Ferrand." At that name, Rodolphe suddenly stopped. He started, as if for the first time he had pronounced that name: it was the first time that he had pronounced it, since he knew that his daughter was that monster's victim. The features of the Prince now assumed a frightful expression of rage and hatred. Silent and motionless he remained, as if overwhelmed by the thought that the murderer of his daughter was still living

Sarah, in spite of her increasing weakness, and the agitation which the conversation of Rodolphe naturally produced, was confounded by the threatening expression of his countenance, and trembled for herself.

"Alas! what ails you?" she exclaimed, in a tremulous voice. "Have I not suffered enough already? Just Heaven!"

"No! it is not enough—not enough!" said Rodolphe, speaking to himself, and responding to his own thoughts. "I have never before felt what I now feel: such a thirst for vengeance—such a yearning for blood—such cool and collected rage! When I did not know that one of that monster's victims was my own child, I said to myself, 'The death of that man would be unavailing; whereas his life would be useful, if to redeem it he would accept the conditions imposed. To condemn him to beggary for the purpose of expiating his crimes, appears to me to be just.' A life without gold—a life without the means of gratifying his frenzied sensuality, would have been to him a long and distressing torture. But it is my daughter, whom as a child he delivered to all the torments of misery—as a young girl, to all the horrors of infamy!" exclaimed Rodolphe, becoming more and more excited: "it is my daughter, whom finally he murdered! His blood must atone for the crime!" and the Prince rushed for the door.

"Where are you going? Do not abandon me!" exclaimed Sarah, rising partially, and stretching toward Rodolphe her supplicating hands; "do not leave me alone! I am dying!"

"Alone? no, no! the spectre of your daughter will attend you, whose death you have caused!"

Sarah, horror-stricken, fell upon her knees, uttering a shriek of fear, as if a denizen of the grave stood before her. "Mercy! I pray for mercy! I am dying!"

"Die, then, cursed one!" exclaimed Rodolphe, in a frenzied tone. "Now, now, I must have the life of your accomplice! for it is you who delivered your daughter to her executioner!" and Rodolphe entered his carriage, and ordered himself to be driven to the house of Jacques Ferrand.

CHAPTER VI..... "FURENS AMORIS."

NIGHT had approached, while Rodolphe was on his way to the house of the notary.

The pavilion occupied by the wretch who was expiating his crimes, is plunged in darkness. The wind is moaning; the rain falls in torrents. The rain also fell, the wind also howled, when his avenging fury, having excited to frenzy the passions of her victim, had fled from him for ever.

Stretched upon a couch, in his chamber, where the light of a lamp glimmers, Jacques Ferrand is dressed in black; one of the sleeves of his shirt is rolled up, and spotted with blood; a bandage upon his arm announces that he has recently been bled by Polidori.

The physician, standing by the bed, and with one hand leaned upon it, surveys, with awakened curiosity, the features of his accomplice. Nothing that the fancy can conceive, could be more hideously frightful than the face of the notary, while he lies plunged in that comatose state, which usually precedes the violent crisis of a disease. Cold sweat rolled from his countenance of livid paleness, indicating plainly that he has reached the last stages of this consuming atrophy. His closed eyelids are so swollen, and inflamed with blood, that they appear like two balls of red, in that face of cadaverous hue.

"Another paroxysm as violent as the last, will end him," said Polidori, in a low voice. "Aretæus* says, that the majority of those attacked by this strange and frightful disease, usually perish on the seventh day, and it is now six days since the infernal Creole kindled the unquenchable fire which devours this man." After a few moments of thoughtful silence, Polidori retired from the bed, and slowly paced the room. "Just now," added he, stopping, "during this last attack, which nearly terminated the tortures of Jacques, I thought myself under the illusions of a dream, in hearing him describe, one by one, and in an oppressed voice, the monstrous hallucinations which dance through his brain. What a terrible disease! By turns, it subjects each organ to phenomena, which disconcert science and frighten nature. A moment since, the *hearing* of Jacques was so acutely and painfully sensitive, that, although I spoke to him in as low a voice as I could, my words struck his morbid tympanum with such violence, that he fancied, said he, his head was a bell, and that an enormous brazen clapper, set in motion by the least sound, swung, in his head, from one temple to the other, with deafening noise and distressing shocks."

Polidori again stood pensive before the bed of Jacques Ferrand, near which he had now approached. The tempest roared without, and it soon burst forth with redoubled fury, in hissing and violent gusts of wind and rain, which shook every window of that dilapidated mansion. Notwithstanding the atrocious wickedness of Polidori, he was inclined to superstition; dark presentiments arose in his mind; he felt a restlessness which cannot be described; the roaring of the hurricane, which alone broke the ominous silence of the night, inspired him with fears against which he struggled in vain. To banish from his mind these gloomy thoughts, he again studied the features of his accomplice.

"Now," said he, leaning over him, "the blood is rushing to his eyelids; one would almost say that his boiling blood concentrates there. The organ of *sight* will soon, as the organ of hearing did recently, offer, in its turn, some extraordinary phenomena. What torments he endures! how long they last, and how varied they are! When nature attempts to be cruel," he added, with a bitter smile, "and to play the part of a torturer, it passes beyond the most frightful inventions of man. Thus, in this disease, produced by an erotic frenzy, it subjects every sense to inconceivable and superhuman agony; it develops the sensibility of each organ to a most incomprehensible degree, so that the intensity of the suffering is also incomprehensible." After having studied attentively, for some time, the features of his accomplice, he shuddered with disgust, started back, and said, "What a frightful mask! those nervous quiverings, that twitching and springing of the muscles, make his countenance hideous!"

The tempest still increased in violence.

"What a storm!" said Polidori, seating himself in a chair and leaning his brow upon his hands; "what a night! what a night!

* "*Nam plerumque in septima die hominem consumit.*"—ARETÆUS. See also, a translation of Baldassar, Cas. Med. lib. iii., "*Salicitas nitra curata.*" See, likewise, the wonderful pages of Ambrose Paré, on satyriasis: "That strange and frightful disease, which resembles so much," says he, "a visitation of God."

Nothing could be more unfavorable to the situation of Jacques." After a long silence he continued:

"I do not know whether the Prince, informed of the infernal blandishments of Cecile, and of Jacques's inflammable susceptibility, foresaw that in a man of his fiery temperament, and vigorous physique, the ardor of a burning and ungratified passion, combined with a kind of avaricious rage, would develope this frightful nervous disease, of which Jacques is a victim. From those causes it is a necessary and natural consequence. Oh, yes!" said he, rising suddenly, as if he had been frightened by the thought; "yes, the Prince undoubtedly foresaw this result. His rare and varied knowledge is not ignorant of any science; his profound glance seizes both cause and effect. Merciless in his justice, he based the punishment of Jacques upon logical deductions concerning the effects of a brutal passion, exasperated to madness."

After a long pause, Polidori continued: "When I think of the past; when I think of the projects which, together with Sarah, I founded upon the youth of the Prince—by what a strange sequence of events, by what successive steps of degradation, have I fallen into the criminal subjection in which I now live! I, who supposed I could enervate that Prince, and make him the docile instrument of an elevation of which I had dreamed. From preceptor, I expected to become minister; and in spite of my knowledge and my intellect, from step to step, from crime to crime, I have finally reached the lowest depths of infamy. I am now here, the jailer of my accomplice;" and Polidori plunged in gloomy reflection, which again brought Rodolphe to his mind. "I fear and hate the Prince," said he; "but I am forced to bow in subjection to that mind;—to that mighty will, which passes beyond all known limits; and resorts to resources and combinations, which were unknown before. What a strange contrast in the man—charitable enough to devise the bank for unemployed laborers; and ferocious enough to preserve Jacques Ferrand from death, in order that he might surrender him to all the vengeful furies of lust."

"Nothing, however, could be more orthodox, or better sustained by precedent," continued he, with a bitter sneer. "Among the paintings which Michael Angelo executed of the seven capital sins, in his picture of the 'Last Judgment,' in the Chapel Sixtine, I saw the terrible punishment he inflicts on lust.* But the hideous and convulsive faces of those damned in the flesh, who were twisting in agony under the poisonous sting of enraged serpents, are less frightful to my mind than the face of Jacques Ferrand during his last fit. He frightened me!" and Polidori shuddered as if the fearful vision was still before his eyes.

"Oh, yes!" he continued, with a frightened expression; "the prince is merciless. It would have been a thousand times better, for Ferrand to have placed his head upon the scaffold; better the fire, the wheel, the molten lead which burns the vitals, than the torments which this wretch endures. Seeing him suffer so much, I was alarmed for my own fate. What has he in reserve for me, the accomplice of Jacques? It will not satisfy the prince to condemn me merely to be his jailer; he did not save me from the scaffold to allow me to live in freedom. Perhaps an endless dungeon awaits me in Germany—that would be preferable to death. I could do nought but surrender myself blindly to his discretion. It was my only chance of escape. At times, in spite of his promise, I am assailed by fear. Will they deliver me to the executioner if Jacques dies? To erect the scaffold for me while he lives, would be to erect it also for him, my accomplice. But if he dies? And yet I know, that the word of the Prince is sacred. But I, who have so often violated divine and human laws, could I invoke his sworn promise? No matter; in the same manner that it was for my interest that Jacques should not escape, it will be, also, my interest to lengthen his days; but the symptoms of his disorder become more aggravated every instant; a miracle, almost, would be required to save him. What shall I do?"

At this moment the tempest had reached its height; a chimney blown down by the violence of the wind, fell upon the roof, and dashed into the court with the noise of thunder.

Jacques Ferrand, aroused suddenly from his apathy, moved upon his bed. Polidori felt more and more under the influence of the vague terror which overpowered him.

"It is foolish to give way to presentiments," said he; "but this night appears to me to forbode calamity."

A distressing groan from the notary, now attracted Polidori's attention. "His torpor is passing away," said the physician to himself; "perhaps he will pass into another stage of the disease."

"Polidori! Polidori!" murmured Jacques Ferrand, stretched upon his back, and with his eyes closed; "what is that noise?"

"A chimney has fallen," replied Polidori, in a low voice, fearing to strike too vividly the excited ear of his accomplice; "an awful storm shakes the house to its foundation; the night is horrible! horrible!"

The notary did not hear his companion, and continued, turning partly his head, "Polidori! Polidori! You are not here, then?"

"Yes! yes! I am here!" said Polidori, in a louder tone; "but I replied to you softly, through fear of increasing the pain of your excited organ of sound, by too loud a tone."

"No! your voice now reaches my ear without producing the awful distress which it did before; for, it seemed to me, at the least sound, that the thunder was bursting into my brain; and yet, in the midst of that roar, of those nameless tortures, I distinguished the passionate voice of Cecile calling me."

"Is that infernal woman ever present! You must drive those thoughts from your mind, or they will kill you."

"Those thoughts are my life, and, like it, resist my suffering."

"But, maniac that you are, those are the thoughts which produce these tortures. Your sickness is nothing but your sensual frenzy, inflamed to its highest exasperation. I beseech you to expel these lascivious images, or you will perish."

"Drive away those images?" exclaimed the distempered wretch; "never, never! I fear even that my mind will exhaust itself in summoning them. But, by hell! it shall not exhaust itself! The more the burning image dances through my brain, the more it resembles reality. As soon as pain leaves me a moment of repose—as soon as I can connect two ideas—Cecile, the demon of my caresses and my curses, rushes to my sight."

"What unconquerable fury! he frightens me!"

"Look, now!" said the notary, in a trembling voice, and with his eyes riveted upon the obscurity of the alcove; "I already see her white and indistinct form! There—there!" and he pointed his hairy and fleshless finger in the direction of the vision.

"Hush, miserable wretch!"

"Ha, ha, ha! there she is!"

"Jacques, it is death—death!"

"Ha! I see her!" said the victim, with his teeth close together, without answering Polidori. "There she is, beautiful as life! How her black locks float in disorder upon her shoulders, and her beautiful teeth, dazzling between her parted lips!—her lips, so rosy and so moist! Her large eyes sparkle and languish in turn. Cecile! Cecile!" he added, in unrestrained excitement; "I adore you!"

"Jacques, hear me—hear me!

"Welcome, damnation! if my eyes could be cheered with this endless vision!"

"Jacques!" exclaimed Polidori, alarmed, "do not gaze upon those visions."

"It is not a vision!"

"Beware! You heard, but a moment since, the enticing strains which she sang, and your ear was immediately seized with distressing pain. Beware—beware! I say."

"Leave me—leave me!" exclaimed the notary, with impatient anger. "What is the use of ears, unless to hear her? of sight, unless to see her?"

"But tortures will follow, miserable wretch!"

"I can brave tortures for this vision—I have braved death for the reality! What is the difference! This delightful image is to me a reality. Lovely, rapturous Cecile! you know, monster, that you are charming! Why do you practice those fascinations upon me?—those coquettish arts, now inviting, now repulsive, which consume me? Hateful fury! do you wish to kill me? Cease, cease! or I will strangle you!" exclaimed the notary, raving.

"But you will kill yourself, miserable man!" exclaimed Polidori, shaking the notary roughly, to recall him from his trance.

Futile efforts! Jacques continued, in a more vehement and frantic strain:

"Beloved queen! demon of enticement!——" The notary could not finish: he uttered a shrill cry of pain, and fell back.

"What ails you?" exclaimed Polidori, in astonishment.

"Extinguish that lamp! Its flame is too bright to be endured—it dazzles my eyes!"

"What!" said Polidori, more and more surprised; "the lamp is covered with a shade, and its light is remarkably dim."

"I tell you that the light is increasing; behold! behold! it is intolerable!" added Jacques Ferrand, closing his eyes with an expression of extreme pain.

* "Carried away by his subject, his imagination excited by eight years of continual meditation upon a day so horrible to a believer, Michael Angelo, elevated to the dignity of a preacher, and thinking of nothing but his salvation, wished to punish in the most striking manner, the vice which was then most current. The horror of that punishment seems to me to approach the sublime."—STENDHALD'S *Histories of Paintings in Italy*, p. 364.

"You are mad! the room is hardly lighted, I tell you. I have just diminished the flame; open your eyes and you will see."

"Open my eyes! the flood of fire with which the room is filled would blind me; here! there! everywhere! I see sparks of fire, volumes of flame! A furnace here! there! everywhere!" exclaimed the notary, raising himself upon the bed; and uttering a fresh shriek of pain, he covered his eyes with his hands. "I am blind! I am blind! this vivid light pierces my closed eyelids! it burns! it consumes me! My hands protect slightly my vision;—but extinguish the light; it spouts forth an infernal flame!"

"There can be no longer any doubt that his sight is now struck with that excruciating sensibility with which his hearing was recently affected; another paroxysm of this disorder and he is dead. To bleed again in his present condition would be fatal: he is lost."

A new, sharp and piercing cry from the suffering mortal, echoed through the deserted house.

"Executioner! put out the light! its burning flame penetrates my hands and eyelids! both are transparent! I see the blood circulating through my veins; it is useless to close my eyelids, or to protect my vision with my hands—this penetrating lava reaches the pupil of my eye! Ah! ah! what agony! Red-hot spikes of iron are thrust into the sockets of my eyes! Help! help!" he exclaimed, writhing on his bed in frightful convulsions of distress.

Polidori, frightened by the violence of this new attack, suddenly extinguished the lamp, and both remained together in the profound darkness of that chamber. At this moment the noise of a carriage was heard drawing up to the door of the mansion.

CHAPTER VII. ..... THE VISIONS.

When darkness had invaded the room where Polidori and the notary now were, the acute anguish of the latter gradually ceased.

"Why did you so long delay extinguishing the light?" said Jacques Ferrand. "Was it to make me endure the torments of the damned! How much I have suffered! what tortures have visited me!"

"Do you suffer less now?"

"I still feel a violent irritation; but it is ease, comfort, compared with the pain I have just experienced."

"I told you that such would be the result; as soon as the recollection of that woman excites one of your senses, that sense will be struck with those phenomena which baffle all science, and which believers might regard as a visitation of God."

"Do n't speak to me of God!" exclaimed the monster, gnashing his teeth.

"I merely spoke to you of God for memory's sake; but since you are so much attached to life, however miserable it may be, remember, I repeat to you, that you will be carried away during one of these terrible paroxysms, if you provoke them again."

"I am attached to life, because the recollection of Cecile constitutes my life."

"But that memory kills, exhausts, consumes you."

"I neither can nor wish to abstract my mind from it. I am incorporated with Cecile like the blood to the body. That man has extorted from me all my fortune; but he could not take from me the imperishable image of that enchantress! That image is mine; at all hours it is by my side as a slave. She says what I wish; she looks at me as I wish! she adores me as I wish!" exclaimed the notary, in a new fit of frenzy.

"Jacques, restrain your excitement; remember the crisis you have just passed."

The notary did not see his accomplice, who foresaw some new hallucination. Jacques Ferrand actually burst forth in a peal of convulsive and sardonic laughter: "Can they take Cecile from me! They do not know that, by concentrating all the faculties on one object, the mind can attain to the unseen—the invisible; so that, presently, I shall ascend to the room of Cecile, which I have not dared approach since her departure. Yes; seeing, touching the clothes which belonged to her, the glass before which she dressed will insure to me her presence there; and in fixing my eyes earnestly upon that glass, I soon shall see her form appear, and it will be no illusion, no vision; it will be her bodily form; ha! ha! I shall find her there, as the sculptor finds the statue in the marble block. But, by all the flames of hell with which I am burning, she shall not be a pale, cold, forbidding Galatea!"

"Where are you going?" exclaimed Polidori, upon hearing Jacques rise; for the deepest darkness reigned in the apartment.

"I am going after Cecile."

"You shall not go; the sight of that room would kill you."

"Cecile is waiting for me above."

"You shall not go; I will hold you," said Polidori, seizing the notary by the arm. Jacques, who had reached the last degree of exhaustion, could not struggle against his accomplice, who held him with a vigorous grasp.

"Do you wish to prevent me from seeing Cecile?"

"Yes; and besides, there is a lighted lamp in the adjoining room, and you are well aware of the effect the light produced upon your vision, a moment since."

"Cecile is up-stairs, and waiting for me. I would burst through a burning furnace to see her! Leave me! She told me that I was her old tiger; beware! my claws are sharp!"

"You shall not leave the room. I would sooner bind you to the bed as a furious maniac."

"Polidori, hear me. I am not mad, I am in possession of every sense; I know very well that Cecile is not actually in her chamber, but the phantoms of my fancy are as consoling to me as realities."

"Silence!" exclaimed Polidori suddenly, inclining his ear, "I thought I heard, a moment since, a carriage stop at the door; I was not mistaken, I hear, now, voices in the court."

"You wish to divert my thoughts; but your stratagem is seen through."

"I now hear some one speaking; I think that I recognize the voice."

"You wish to deceive me," said Jacques Ferrand, interrupting Polidori; "I will not be your dupe."

"Listen, miserable wretch! do you not hear?"

"Release me; Cecile calls me! Do not infuriate me! I warn you, in my turn, to beware! Do you hear me? Beware!"

"You shall not go!"

"Beware!"

"You shall not leave this place; my interest demands it."

"If you dare to prevent me from going to see Cecile, my interest will demand that you shall die. Take it, then!" said the notary, in a stern and sepulchral tone.

A shriek burst from Polidori: "Wretch, you have struck me in the arm; but you are feeble, the wound is slight, and you shall not escape me."

"Thy wound is mortal! 'tis from the poisoned stiletto of Cecile; I wear it in my bosom—the poison is sure! I shall be released! Ha! your grasp loosens! you are a dead man! You should not have stepped between me and Cecile!" exclaimed the notary, groping his way to the door.

"My arm is benumbed," cried Polidori; "a mortal coldness seizes me; my knees falter; my blood is congealed; my head swims. Help! help!" exclaimed the accomplice of Jacques Ferrand, concentrating his remaining strength in a final appeal for aid; "help, or I shall die!" and he dropped upon the floor.

The noise of a glass door, forced open with so much violence that panes of glass jingled upon the floor; the sonorous voice of Rodolphe, and precipitate footsteps answered the agonized appeal of Polidori.

Jacques Ferrand, having finally found the lock, opened the door and rushed into the adjoining apartment, with the murderous weapon in his hand. At the same instant, formidable and threatening as the god of vengeance, the Prince entered from the opposite door.

"Monster!" exclaimed Rodolphe, advancing toward Jacques Ferrand, "it is my daughter whom you have slain—you will ——"

The Prince could not complete the sentence, but started back in affright. Jacques Ferrand was thunderstruck by his words. Throwing away his stiletto, and covering his eyes with his hands, the wretch fell face foremost to the floor, uttering a cry like the wail of the damned. Darkness had suspended the action of his disordered vision; but the horrible phenomena were developed in all their fury when the rays of light glared upon his eyes, and his sight was struck with flames of more intense and glaring effulgence, than if he had been plunged in the disc of the sun. The agony of the man was frightful to behold. He was writhing in convulsions, as if roasted on coals of fire; tearing the floor with his nails in a paroxysm of anguish, as if he wished to dig for himself a pit where he might escape from the intolerable glare of the flames, which appeared to surround him!

Rodolphe, with one attendant and the porter of the house, who had been compelled to conduct the Prince to the door of the room, started back in terror and horror from the dreadful spectacle. In spite of the heart-rending reasons which fired the wrath of Rodolphe against the notary, he could scarcely restrain a throb of compassion at the intense torments of the man. He

ordered him to be conveyed to a sofa. It was with great difficulty accomplished, for the fear of exposure to the direct action of the lamp, stimulated the notary with unnatural strength; and when the light fell upon his face, a new shriek burst from his tortured senses—a shriek which paralyzed Rodolphe with terror. After protracted agony the attack terminated by its own violence. Having reached that limit which, if augmented but one degree, death would ensue, the visual suffering ceased. But, according to the usual symptoms of that disease, a delirious state succeeded; and suddenly, the limbs of the notary were stiffened as with the muscular contraction of epilepsy. His eyelids, which had been thus far closed, suddenly opened, and instead of avoiding the light, his eyes were fastened upon it; the pupils fixed and dilated, seemed, like phosphorus, to shine with their own lustre. He was rapt in a sort of extatic revery. His chest and limbs were motionless; his features, alone, were twitched about by nervous convulsions. His hideous face, wrenched and distorted, bore a resemblance to nothing human. It seemed as if his brutal appetite, having first extinguished his reason, had now stamped the lineaments of the brute upon his features.

Having arrived at the mortal period of his delirium, even in this last glimmer of expiring intelligence, the words of Cecile were still mefaced from his mind; and as his reason stole gradually away, he fancied that he was a tiger. His broken and constrained words depicted the disorder of his brain, and the strange fancies in which his maddened intellect revelled. By degrees his limbs, which had thus far been stiff and motionless, relaxed, and he fell from the sofa. He struggled to rise and walk; but, deserted by his strength, he was obliged to creep like a serpent, or move himself forward on his hands and knees, going to and fro, chasing round the room the visions of his delirium. Crouching in one of the angles of the room, as in a den, he imagined that he was a tiger. His enraged growling, the furious gnashing of his teeth, the convulsive twitching of the muscles of his face and forehead, his fiery and glaring eye, imparted to the debased child of humanity a certain and indefinite resemblance to the beast of his disordered brain.

"Tiger—tiger—tiger—I am!" said he, in broken and convulsive efforts of utterance, shrinking up into a heap. "Yes, tiger! How much blood stains my cave! how many mangled corpses here!—Goualeuse—the brother of that widow—the child of Louise—these are the carcases!—and my tigress shall have her share." Casting a glance upon his bony fingers, the nails of which had grown quite long during his sickness, he added these broken words: "Sharp—cutting claws—an old tiger—but active—vigorous—bold; who will dare to quarrel with me for my tigress? Hark! she calls—she calls!" said he, protruding his monstrous face, and inclining his ear. After a moment's silence, he again groped along the wall, saying, "No; I thought I heard her—but she is not there. But I see her—always—always! There she springs—she roars—yonder! I come—I come!" and Jacques Ferrand dragged himself upon his knees and hands to the centre of the room. Although his strength was exhausted, the convulsive action of his muscles occasionally twitched him forward; and when he was in a state of rest, he would listen attentively. "Where is she? where is she? I approach—but she flies. Ah!—yonder—she is. Wait—wait—bite the sand—utter your plaintive roar—glare open your ferocious eyes! Ha, ha! they become languishing now; they woo—they implore. Cecile—Cecile!—thy old tiger is here!" and, with a final effort, he raised himself upon his knees. But suddenly, throwing himself back with affright, his body supported on his heels, his hair on end, his looks wild, his mouth distorted with terror, his hands stretched forward, he struggled in an agony of fear and rage against some invisible object; speaking unconnected words in a smothered tone: "What a sting!—help!—my arms are broken—I cannot force it from me—sharp teeth—no, no!—not my eyes—help, help!—a black smoke—his black head—fiery eyes—he glares upon me—it is the devil!—he knows me—Jacques Ferrand—to church, holy man!—ever in church. Go, go away!" he exclaimed, making a sign of the cross. "Avaunt!" repeating the sign; and the notary, raising himself on the floor with one hand, made an attempt with the other to mark upon his brow the sign of salvation. The sweat gushed from his ghastly visage. His eyes began to lose their transparency; they became like dead men's eyes, with no speculation in them. All the symptoms of approaching dissolution manifested themselves. Rodolphe and the other witnesses of this scene, remained motionless and silent, as if they were under the impression of a frightful dream.

"Ha!" continued the victim of delirium, still upon the floor, and sustained with one hand; "a black dog—three white hares—the devil! he flies!—he is gone!—a holy man! I pray—do you think no one will know it? No! no! tempter—very sure?—the secret! Well; let those women come!—all! all!—if no one knows it!" and on the hideous countenance of this victim, whose crimes of lust were visited with this fearful retribution, could now be discerned the expiring convulsions of sensual agony. His feet in the grave which his frenzy had opened, and pursued by frightful phantoms, he still invoked licentious images.

"Come on!" continued the notary, in an oppressed voice—"females!—fiends!—the secret! the secret! You approach a holy man!—here they are—three in number—fatal three!—What does this one utter? 'I am Louise Morel!' Yes! yes! I know you! 'I am but a poor girl! see! behold! Jacques!—a forest of black hair unfolded on my shoulders—you will find my face beautiful—there! there!—take it!—look at it!' What does she give me? Her head!—cut off!—by the hangman!—a dead head! it stares at me!—that dead head speaks to me!—its blue lips move: *come! come! come!* like Cecile. No! I will not! I will not! Demon! avaunt! And this other woman—beautiful! beautiful! 'I am the Duchess!—Jacques! My goddess form!—my bold look!—my smile—come! come! Yes, I come!—but wait!' And this one who turns her face—Cecile! Cecile! 'Yes, Jacques! I am Cecile!—behold three graces! Louise, the Duchess and me!—humble beauty!—patrician beauty!—wild and tropical beauty! and hell with us! Come! come! come!"

"Hell with you!" exclaimed the maniac, raising himself with an expiring effort to seize the impalpable phantoms of his diseased mind. This last convulsive struggle was followed by mortal throes; he instantly fell back stiff and inanimate, his eyes seemed to start from their sockets, horrid spasms distorted his features, as the galvanic battery does the faces of the dead; bloody foam oozed from his lips; his voice hissed and gasped like that of a man in the hydrophobia; for in its last paroxysm this awful disease, this retributive punishment of lust, exhibits the same symptoms as that dreaded disorder. The monster spirit passed away in the midst of a final vision, which faded upon his dying senses. He stammered these words:

"Dark night—dark ghosts—brazen skeletons entwine red hot arms and burning fingers! My flesh smokes—my marrow is on fire! Obstinate ghosts! No! no! Cecile!—fire!—Cecile!"

Such were the last words of Jacques Ferrand.

Rodolphe left the room in terror.

CHAPTER VIII. ..... THE HOSPITAL.

The reader will remember that Fleur de Marie, rescued by Louve, had been conveyed to the house of Dr. Griffon, not far from the Island of the Ravageur. He was one of the physicians of a public hospital,* to which we will now accompany him.

The learned doctor, who had obtained, by distinguished patronage, a situation in that hospital, regarded his halls as a theatre of experiment, where he tested that mode of treatment upon his poor inmates which he afterward applied to his rich patients; for he never would hazard upon those of the higher classes who employed him, a system of cure, until he had frequently experimented, in regard to its safety, upon "*anima vili*," as he said himself, with that professional barbarity peculiar to the healing art, and peculiar to the habit and power of exercising, without fear and without control, upon a creature of God, all the capricious contrivances, all the learned fancies of an inventive mind. For instance, the doctor wished to assure himself of the effect of some new and doubtful medicinal treatment, in order to guide himself in administering it in future; he would, therefore, take a certain number of patients, and treat these according to this new mode of practice, those by the old method, and abandon the others to the restorative power of nature; after which he would draw up an account of those who survived. Such experiments are human sacrifices on the altar of science. A thought of its inhumanity never occurred to Dr. Griffon's mind: In the eyes of that master of science, the patients in his hospital were only materials for study and experiments. And if, from these experiments, some medical fact was thoroughly established, or some new discovery made, the doctor was as triumphant as a conqueror after a victory which has cost the lives of thousands. Homœopathy, at the time it was first promulged, had found no more un-

* The name which I have the honor to bear, and which my father, grandfather, grand uncle and great grandfather—one of the most learned men of the seventeenth century—have rendered celebrated by great works on theoretical and practical medicine, would forbid me from any attack, or hasty reflection concerning physicians; even though the gravity of the subject upon which I treat, and the just and deserved celebrity of the French Medical School, did not prevent me. In the creation of Dr. Griffon, I have only wished to personify one of those, otherwise respectable, but who allow themselves sometimes to be carried away by the ardor of the art; and led to make experiments, which are a serious abuse of medical power, if I may express myself in this manner.) forgetting that there is something more sacred than science—humanity.

yielding adversary than Dr. Griffon. He regarded that system of cure as absurd, unscientific and homicidal. Strong in his convictions, and anxious to drive the homœopathists from the field, with chivalrous generosity he offered to abandon them a certain number of patients, upon whom they might practice their favorite system according to their best judgment. But he affirmed beforehand, with perfect confidence, that the result would confirm his prediction, that out of twenty patients treated in that manner, five only would survive. The homœopathists refused the proposition, to the great chagrin of Dr. Griffon, who regarded this as a fine opportunity of proving, by figures, the vanity of homœopathic pretensions. The doctor would have been amazed, if he had been told, respecting this free and absolute disposition of his patients: "Such an experiment would make us sigh for those barbarous epochs, when those sentenced to death were condemned to endure certain surgical operations recently discovered, but which no one had yet the courage to apply. If the operation succeeded, the condemned criminal was pardoned. Compared with what you propose, sir, such barbarity was charitable; they gave a chance of life to a wretch destined for the scaffold, and they tested an experiment which might be serviceable to the lives of others. But to try your adventurous systems upon poor artisans, whose only refuge is the hospital, when attacked by disease;—to try a treatment, perhaps fatal, upon the poor whom misery delivers confident and disarmed into your hands—your hands their only hope, and for whose lives you are answerable only to God—do you not know, sir, that such conduct would be to carry your love of science to inhumanity and cruelty? The poor classes already fill our workshops, our fields and our armies; they know nothing in life but poverty and privation; and when, at the termination of fatigue and suffering, they fall down half-dead and attenuated, sickness itself does not protect them from a last and sacrilegious abuse. I appeal to your heart, sir, is not such conduct cruel and iniquitous?"

Alas! Dr. Griffon might have been touched by such language, but he would not have been convinced. Man is constituted in this manner; the captain looks upon his soldiers as mere instruments, in that bloody game called a battle; and it is because man is thus made, that society should defend those who are exposed to the direct action of human necessities.

The character of Dr. Griffon, once admitted to be a true delineation, the inmates of his hospital had no guaranty, no resource whatever, against the scientific barbarity of his experiments; for there exists a great deficiency in the organization of public hospitals: we will point it out here, with the hope that we shall be understood.

The military hospitals are daily visited by a superior officer, who is charged with hearing the complaints of the sick soldier, and to relieve their grievances, if he finds them reasonable. This surveillance, bringing a power entirely distinct from the health-service, to watch over its administration, is excellent, and has always produced the best results; and establishments can seldom be found, which are better managed than military hospitals. The soldiers receive the kindest attention, and we might almost say, that they are treated with respectful commiseration.

Why should not a surveillance, analogous to that of the military, be practiced in the public hospitals, by men entirely independent of the government of the hospital, and the health-service? by a committee selected, perhaps, from the mayors, or their aids—among all those, in short, who have any office in the corporation of Paris;—offices which are always eagerly solicited. The complaints of the poor, if they were well founded, would meet with an impartial tribunal; such a tribunal is, however, entirely wanting now, for there exists no system of checks, and counter-control, in the service of the hospitals, which appears to us to be a serious evil.

When the doors of Dr. Griffon's halls were once closed upon a patient, the latter belonged, body and soul, to science; no friendly or disinterested ear could listen to his complaints. He was plainly told that, being admitted through charity, he constituted one of the experimental instruments of the doctor, and that his disease was to serve as a subject of study, observation, analysis, or instruction, to the pupils who followed constantly in the train of the chief physician. The subject was frequently obliged to answer questions, which were often of the most painful character, not only to the ears of the physician, who is invested with a sort of sacerdotal character, and has a right to know everything; but to answer, in a loud voice, before an inquisitive and curious crowd, in that pandemonium of science—old or young, matron or maid, were obliged to forget all feeling of delicacy and shame, and to make the most confidential revelation, and to submit to the most repugnant bodily disclosures, before a large assembly. These cruel formalities almost universally aggravated the disease. Such conduct is neither humane nor just. It is because the poor enter the hospital, in the sacred and holy name of charity, that they should be treated with compassion and respect; for there is a certain dignity about misfortune.

When the reader peruses the lines which follow, he will see the reason of these preliminary reflections.

Nothing is more heart-rending than the nocturnal aspect of the vast hall of the hospital into which we shall now introduce the reader. Along its high and gloomy walls, pierced here and there with windows barred like those of prisons, are extended parallel rows of beds, dimly lighted by the sepulchral glare of a lamp suspended from the ceiling. The atmosphere is so nauseating and corrupt, that the new patient is seldom acclimated without danger. This additional suffering is a sort of initiation fee, which every new-comer is obliged to pay for admission into his gloomy residence. After a few days, a diseased pallor announces that the patient has undergone the influence of that deleterious atmosphere, and that he has become acclimated. The atmosphere of this immense hall is therefore heavy and fœtid. At intervals, the silence of the night is interrupted by plaintive groans, or by profound sighs, drawn from the feverish patient. At other times, silence is only broken by the monotonous and regular ticking of a large clock, which marks the long nights of the sleepless sufferer. One of the extremities of the hall was plunged in darkness; but suddenly, in that part of the room, was heard the movement of precipitate steps; a door was several times opened and closed; a sister of charity, whose dark dress and white hood were distinguishable by means of a lamp which she carried, approached one of the last beds of the right range. Some of the patients, suddenly aroused, seated themselves in their beds, listening to the cause of their movement. The folding door-way suddenly opened, and a priest entered, bearing a crucifix, and the two sisters of charity knelt down. By the glimmering of the light, which encircled the bed with a pale aureole, while the other parts of the hall were in the shade, the chaplain of the hospital could be heard pronouncing a few words over the couch of misery, the fading sounds of which were lost in the silence of the night.

Within a quarter of an hour the priest raised the extremity of the sheet, and covered the bed completely with it, and departed from the room. One of the sisters, who was kneeling by its side arose, drew the curtains, the rings of which creaked along the iron bars, and continued her prayers by the side of her companion; after which, profound silence reigned throughout the hall. One of the patients had just died.

Among the females who did not sleep, but had watched the mute ceremonial, were three persons, whose names have already been mentioned in the course of this narrative; Mademoiselle de Fermont, Lorraine, a poor wash-woman, to whom Goualeuse had formerly given the small sum which remained of her earnings, and Jeanne Duport, the sister of Pique Vinaigre, the story-teller of la Force.

We are acquainted with Mademoiselle de Fermont, and the sister of Pique Vinaigre; as for Lorraine, she was a woman of about twenty years of age, with a mild and regular face, but extremely pale and emaciated. She was in the last stages of consumption, and no hope was entertained for her life. She was herself conscious that she was slowly fading away. The interval between the couches of the two last named individuals was so narrow, that they could converse in a low tone without being overheard by the sisters of charity.

"There is another gone!" said Lorraine, in a low voice, thinking of the deceased, and speaking to herself: "she is beyond the reach of suffering—she is happy!"

"She is happy, if she has no children," added Jeanne.

"Are you not asleep, my neighbor?" said Lorraine to her; "how have you passed your first night here? Last evening, the moment you came in, they put you to bed; and I did not dare to speak to you afterward, because I heard you sob."

"Oh! yes, I cried much."

"You suffer much, then?"

"Yes; I am inured to suffering; but it was sorrow that drew forth my tears. I finally went to sleep; but the noise of the door woke me up. When the priest came in, and the good sisters of charity knelt down, I saw, plainly, that there was a patient dying, and I breathed a *pater* and an *ave* for her."

"So, also, did I; and, as I am suffering from the same disease, I could not help saying, there is another who suffers no more—she is very happy."

"Yes, if, as I said before, she has no children."

"You have children, then?"

"Three," said the sister of Pique Vinaigre, with a sigh; "and you?"

"I had a little girl, but I did not keep her long; she was struck

with death before she was born, I suffered so much during my illness. I am a washerwoman; I worked as long as I could; but there is an end to everything. When my strength failed me, bread had also failed: they turned me from my lodgings, and I know not what would have become of me, if a poor woman had not taken me with her in a cellar, where she was concealing herself from her husband, who wished to kill her. It was there, on the straw, that my little girl was born; but, by good fortune, that good woman knew a young female, beautiful and charitable as an angel of God. This young girl had a little money; and she took me from my cave, and provided for me a room and furniture, and paid my rent for a month in advance; giving me, besides, a cradle for my child, and forty francs in money, and some clothes. Thanks to her, I recovered my health, and was able to work again"

"Kind little girl! I also have met, by chance, one who is her equal—a young seamstress—very obliging. I had gone to visit my poor brother, who is a prisoner," said Jeanne, after a moment's hesitation, "and I met in the parlor the young girl of whom I speak. She overheard me tell my brother that I was not happy. She came to me, very bashful, and offered to be useful to me according to her means: the poor child!"

"That was very kind in her."

"I accepted her offer; she gave me her address, and in two days after that, dear little Mademoiselle Rigolette gave me employment."

"Rigolette!" exclaimed Lorraine. "What a singular coincidence!"

"Do you know her?"

"No; but the young girl who was so generous to me, has often mentioned, in my presence, the name of Mademoiselle Rigolette: they were intimate friends."

"Well," said Jeanne, smiling sadly; "since we are neighbors, we should be friends, like our two benefactresses."

"Very willingly; my name is Annette Gertier, surnamed Lorraine—a laundress by trade."

"And my name is Jeanne Duport—a fringe-maker. It is so good in the hospital to meet with some one who is not entirely a stranger to you, especially when one enters here for the first time, and has many sorrows to bear; but I do not wish to think of that. But tell me, Lorraine, what was the name of the young girl who was so kind to you?"

"Her name was Goualeuse. It gives me great pain, because I have not seen her for some time. She was as beautiful as the Holy Virgin, with lovely auburn hair, and blue eyes that were so mild. Unfortunately, my poor child died, notwithstanding her aid, when it was two months old. She was so very small, she had nothing but breath:" and Lorraine wiped away a tear.

"And your husband?"

"I am not married. I was washing, by the day, for a rich lady of my village: I had always been irreproachable in my conduct; but her son deceived me, and then——"

"Oh! yes, I understand."

"When I discovered my situation, I dared not remain in the village. Mr. Jules—that was the name of the rich lady's son—gave me fifty francs to come to Paris, and said that he would send me twenty francs a month for my support, while I was sick; but since I have left home, I have not received anything from him—not even a letter. I wrote to him once, but he gave me no answer. I did not dare to write again, for I saw very well that he did not wish to hear from me."

"And he it is who has ruined you: is he rich?"

"His mother is possessed of a large property; but what could I do? I was not there, and he has forgotten me."

"But, at least, he should have remembered his child."

"On the contrary, it was that which enraged him with me; my situation was the cause of his sending me away."

"Poor Lorraine!"

"I regret my child for my own sake, but not for hers, poor little one! she would have been too miserable, and also an orphan, early in life, for I have but a short time to live."

"You should not indulge in such thoughts at your age. Have you been sick long?"

"For about three months. When I had to earn a livelihood for myself and child, I doubled my labor: I returned to my boat too soon; the winter was very severe; I caught a bad cold. About the same time, I lost my little girl; and while watching with her, I neglected to take care of myself; and sorrow added to that, threw me into a consumption; and I am doomed to die, and so was the actress who has just expired."

"At your age there is always hope."

"The actress was but two years older than myself, and you have seen the event."

"What! was the person with whom the good sisters are praying, an actress?"

"Indeed she was; and behold her fate. She was once very beautiful; with much money, equipages, and diamonds, but, unfortunately, the small-pox disfigured her. She then became poor; misery followed after it, and there she lies in the hospital, dead! However, she was not proud; on the contrary, she was kind and attentive to every one in the hall. No one has ever called to visit her; and yet, four or five days ago, she told us that she had written to a gentleman whom she had formerly known, in the days of her happiness, and who loved her much. She wrote to him, to request that he would come and claim her body, because she could not bear the thought of dissection."

"And did the gentleman come?"

"No."

"It was very wrong."

"Every moment the poor woman asked for him, saying, always, 'he will come; he will certainly come!' and yet she died without seeing him."

"Her death must have been more painful on that account."

"Oh! yes, indeed; for what she dreaded so much, will happen to her poor body."

"After having been rich and happy, it is a sad fate to die here! As for us, we only change our misery."

CHAPTER IX. ..... THE VISIT.

"With regard to that," rejoined Lorraine, after a moment's hesitation, "I should be glad that you would render me a service."

"Tell me what it is."

"Should I die, which is very probable, before you leave this, I should wish you to claim my body—I have the same fears as the actress; and I have placed there the little money I have left, to pay for my burial."

"Do n't have any such ideas as that."

"Never mind—will you promise me?"

"Oh! yes; but, thank God! that will not happen."

"But, should it happen, the same misfortune that occurred to the actress will not, thanks to you! occur to me."

"Poor lady! after having been rich, to end in this way!"

"The actress was not the only one in this ward who has been rich, Madame Jeanne."

"Call me Jeanne, as I call you Lorraine."

"You are very kind."

"Who, then, besides, was rich?"

"A young person, not more than fifteen years old, at most, who was brought in here last evening, before you came in. She was so weak that they were obliged to carry her. The sister of charity says that this young person and her mother, are people of very respectable family, who have been ruined."

"Is her mother here, too?"

"The mother was so ill, that they were not able to move her. The poor young girl would not leave her; and they took advantage of her having fainted away, to bring her here. It was the proprietor of a miserable lodging-house, who, fearing that she might die there, went before the commissary, and made his declaration."

"And where is she?"

"See: there, in the bed just opposite to you."

"And she is only fifteen years old?"

"Scarcely that."

"The age of my eldest daughter!" said Jeanne, not able to restrain her tears; on thinking of her daughter, she began to weep most bitterly.

"Pardon!" said Lorraine, sorrowfully, "pardon! if I have, unknowingly, given you pain, by speaking of your children—perhaps they are ill, too?"

"Alas! I know not what will become of them, if I remain here more than a week!"

"And your husband?"

After a moment's silence, Jeanne resumed, while wiping away her tears—"As we are friends together, Lorraine, I can confide my troubles to you, as you have yours to me: that will relieve me. My husband was a good workman—he got into bad habits, and then abandoned me and my children, after having sold all that we possessed. I set to work again—some good souls assisted me—I began to get a little comfortable again; I brought up my little family in the best way I could;—when my husband returned with a wicked woman, who was his mistress; again seized upon all I had; and, then, I had to begin all over again."

"Poor Jeanne! you could not have helped that?"

"For that, I ought to have obtained a legal separation; but the law costs too dear, as my brother says—alas! you see what this dearness of the law produces for us poor people: a few days ago I went, again, to see my brother, who gave me three francs which he had picked up by relating stories to his fellow-prisoners."

"One sees that you have good hearts in your family," said Lorraine, who, from rare delicacy of interest, did not question Jeanne as to the cause of her brother's imprisonment.

"Well! I summoned up my courage. I thought my husband would not come near me for some time; as he had taken all he could. No! I deceived myself!" added the unhappy woman, shuddering; "there was still my daughter to take from me—my poor Catherine!"

"Your daughter?"

"You will see—you will see! Three days ago I was working, with my children all around me. My husband came in: I saw, at once, by his look, that he had been drinking. 'I am come to carry away Catherine,' said he. Almost mechanically, I caught hold of my daughter's arm, and asked Duport where he was going to take her. 'That's no concern of yours; she is my daughter; let her pack up her things, and follow me!' At hearing this, my blood boiled within me: for, only think, Lorraine, that wicked woman, who is with my husband! it makes one shudder to think of it—but, nevertheless, it is so—she, for a long time, has urged him to make money of our daughter, who is young and pretty! say, is not she a monster?"

"Yes, she must be a real monster."

"'Take away Catherine!' replied I, to Duport, 'never! I well know what your wretched woman wishes to do with her.' 'Take care!' said my husband, whose lips were already white with passion; 'do not irritate me, or I will knock you down!' Thereupon, he took my daughter by the arm, saying, 'Come, let's be going, Catherine.' My poor girl threw her arms about my neck, burst into tears, and cried out, 'I will stay with my mother!' Hearing this, Duport became furious; he tore my child from me, gave me a violent blow on the chest, which threw me on the ground; and, when I was down—when I was down—but, look you, Lorraine," said the unhappy woman, interrupting her story, "he, certainly, would not have been so brutal, had he not been drinking—well! he stamped upon me; overloading me with imprecations!"

"Good gracious! what a wicked wretch he must be!"

"My poor children threw themselves at his feet, begging for mercy—Catherine also. He then said to my daughter, swearing most furiously—'If you do not come with me, I will kill your mother.' I was then vomiting blood; I felt half dead: I could not move; but I cried out to Catherine—'let him kill me sooner; but do not follow your father!' 'You will not hold your tongue, then!' said Duport, giving me a dreadful kick, which made me faint away."

"Ah! what misery! what misery!"

"When I came to myself, I found my two little boys crying near me."

"And your daughter?"

"Gone!" exclaimed the unhappy mother, agonized with grief, and sobbing violently; "yes, gone! My other children told me that her father beat her; threatening, morever, that he would kill me on the spot; and then—how could it be otherwise? the poor thing was distracted: she threw herself upon me to embrace me; she kissed her little brothers, crying bitterly; and then my husband dragged her away. Ah! the vile woman was waiting for him on the stairs—I am sure of that."

"And cannot you complain to the Commissary of Police?"

"At the first moment I thought only of my grief at finding Catherine gone—but I soon felt violent pains throughout my body. I could not walk. Alas! oh God! all I had feared had happened. Yes, I had told my brother 'that one day my husband would beat me so dreadfully that I should be obliged to go to the hospital—and then what would become of my poor children!' and now I am in the hospital, and I say, what will become of my poor children?"

"There is no justice, then, for poor people!"

"Too dear! too dear for us, as my brother says," continued Jeanne Duport, with bitterness. "The neighbors had been to fetch the Commissary—his clerk came to me. It went against me to denounce Duport, but, for my daughter's sake, I did it; only I said, that 'I had been quarrelling with him, because he wished to take away my daughter, and he had *pushed* me down—that it would be nothing—but that I wished to have Catherine back with me, as I was fearful that the wicked woman with whom my husband lives would corrupt her."

"And what did the clerk say to you?"

"That my husband had the right to take away my daughter, not being separated from me; that it would be a misfortune if my daughter turned out badly by following evil counsel, but that those were mere suppositions, and did not suffice to support a complaint against my husband. 'You have only one method,' said the clerk, 'to plead in a civil court—demand a separation—and then the blows your husband has given you, and his conduct with this bad woman, will be in your favor, and he will be compelled to give you back your daughter; without such a proceeding, he has a legal right to keep his daughter with him.' 'But how can I go to law? I have not the means; I have to find food for my children.' 'How can I help it?' said the clerk; 'such is the law.' Yes," rejoined Jeanne, sobbing, "he was right; such is the law; and because it is such, in three months, perhaps, my daughter will be a miserable creature, walking the streets; while, on the other hand, if I had had the means of obtaining a separation from my husband, this would not have happened."

"And this will not happen. Your daughter must love you so much——"

"But she is so young. At that tender age, a girl cannot protect herself; and then her terror, unkind treatment, bad advice, bad example, the obstinacy with which they will insist on her doing wrong—all these things combined, make me tremble for her. My poor brother had foreseen all this—he—he said to me, that this would be the case. My God! my God! my poor Catherine, so gentle, so affectionate; and I, who wished that she should, this year, renew her first communion!"

"Oh! your troubles are too great—and I, who complained of my own fate!" said Lorraine, wiping her eyes. "And your other children?"

"On their account, I did all I could to overcome the pains I suffered, and not to come into the hospital; but my strength failed me. I could not bear up against it. I threw up blood three or four times a day. I have a fever which so oppresses me, that I am no longer in a state to work; but here, at least, I may be cured more speedily, and then I can return to my children, if, before then, they are not dead from hunger, or sent to prison as beggars. While I am shut up here, who can you suppose would attend to them, and feed them?"

"Oh! 't is terrible! Have you no kind neighbors?"

"They are as poor as I am, and have five children of their own. Two children more would fall heavily upon them. However, they promised to feed them *a little*, for eight days; that is all they can do; and to do this, they must deprive themselves of part of the bread they eat; and they have not too much of it now. I must, then, recover in eight days. Oh, yes! recovered or not, I shall go out of this!"

"But, now I think of it, how was it you did not remember that good little workwoman, Mademoiselle Rigolette, whom you met in the prison? She would, most surely, have taken care of them."

"I did think of her; and although the poor little girl may find it difficult to keep herself, I sent a neighbor to her to tell her of the trouble I was in. Unfortunately, she was in the country, where she was going to be married, as the porter of the house in which she lived said."

"Thus, then, in eight days, your poor children—but no—your neighbors will not have the heart to send them away."

"How can they do otherwise? They do not, even now, have enough to satisfy their hunger—and they must take from their own children, to give to mine! No, no! I must be cured within eight days. I have already said so to all the doctors who have questioned me since yesterday, but they only laugh at me. It is to the head physician I must apply for that. When will he be here, Lorraine?"

"Hush! I think this is he. You must not speak while he is making his visit," said Lorraine, whispering to Jeanne.

During the conversation of the two women, the day had began to dawn. A tumultuous movement announced the arrival of Doctor Griffon, who soon entered the ward, accompanied by his friend, the Count de Saint Remy; who, as we have already shown, felt a lively interest in Madame de Fermont and her daughter; but was far from anticipating that he should find this unfortunate young girl in the hospital.

On entering the ward, the cold and austere features of Doctor Griffon appeared to brighten up; throwing around him a look of satisfaction and authority, he answered, with a protecting nod, the eager welcome given to him by the sisters of charity.

The rough and austere countenance of the old Count de Saint Remy bore the impression of a profound melancholy. The ill-success of his endeavors to discover any trace of Mademoiselle de Fermont; the ignominious cowardice of the Viscount, who had preferred to live a life of infamy, rather than die—had overwhelmed him with grief.

"Well," said Doctor Griffon, to the Count, with a triumphant air, "what think you of my hospital?"

"Truly," replied the Count, "I know not why I yielded to your wish—nothing can be more heart-rending than the sight of these rooms, filled with invalids: since I came in here my heart feels cruelly oppressed."

"Bah! bah! in a quarter of an hour you will think nothing of it. You, who are a philosopher, will find ample food for observation; and then, besides, it is disgraceful that you, one of my

oldest friends, should not have seen this theatre of my fame, of my labors; and that you should not have seen me laboring in my vocation. My pride is in my profession. Is this a fault?"

"No, certainly; and after your great exertions for Fleur de Marie, whom you saved, I could not refuse you anything. Poor child! what a touching charm her features still retain, notwithstanding her cruel illness!"

"She furnished me a very curious medical fact—I am quite enchanted with her; by-the-by, how has she passed the night? did you see her this morning before leaving Asnières?"

"No; but Louve, who watches over her with unparalleled care, told me that she had slept well. Could we permit her to write to-day?"

After a moment's hesitation, the doctor replied, "Yes: so long as the *subject* was not perfectly recovered, I feared the most trifling emotion, the slightest exertion of the mind might be injurious: but now, I do not see that there will be any objection to her writing. She can, at least, inform the persons who interest themselves about her, of her position, without doubt;—by-the-by, have you learnt anything new as to the fate of Madame de Fermont and her daughter?"

"Nothing," said Mr. de Saint Remy, sighing, "my incessant endeavors have had no favorable result. My only hope is in the Marchioness d'Harville, who, as I am told, also takes a lively interest in these unfortunate ladies—perhaps she may have some information which may give me some trace of them. I called at her house three days ago, and was informed she was expected every moment. I wrote to her on the subject, begging her to answer me as soon as possible."

During the conversation of Mr. de Saint Remy and Doctor Griffon, several groups had formed around the centre of the ward. Upon this table was a register, in which the students attached to the hospital, and who were recognized by their long white aprons, signed, one by one, the *attendance poll*; a great number of studious and eager pupils successively arrived at the hospital, to augment the scientific train of Doctor Griffon; who, having arrived some minutes sooner than his usual hour for visiting, waited for it to strike.

"You see, my dear de Saint Remy, "that my staff is tolerably numerous," said Doctor Griffon, proudly, pointing to the crowd who had come to attend his practical instructions.

"And these young men attend you at the bed of every invalid?"

"That is all they come for."

"But all these beds are occupied by women."

"Well?"

"The presence of so many men must be very painful to them."

"Pshaw! an invalid has no sex."

"In your eyes, perhaps; but in their own—their modesty, their shame."

"You must leave these fine feelings at the door, my dear Alceste. Here we commence, upon the living subject, experiments and studies which we conclude, in the dissecting room, upon the dead body."

"Stay, doctor; you are the best and worthiest of men. I owe my life to you. I acknowledge your excellent qualities, but habit and the love of your profession, make you regard certain questions in a way that shocks one. I leave you," said Mr. de Saint Remy, moving away to leave the ward.

"What childishness!" said the doctor, retaining him.

"No, no; there are things which make me feel indignant, and which wound my heart; I foresee that to attend you during your visit, will be a torment to me. I will not go away, if you don't wish it; but I will wait for you here, near this table."

"What a man you are, with your scruples! but I will not let you off. I admit that it would be tedious to you to go from bed to bed: stop where you are, then—I will call you to witness two or three cases, which are rather singular."

"Well, be it so, since you insist upon it. That will be enough for me; and besides — "

The clock struck half-past seven. "Come, gentlemen," said Doctor Griffon; and he commenced his visit, followed by a numerous auditory.

On approaching the first bed on the right-hand side, of which the curtains were closed, the sister said to the Doctor—"Number one died this morning, sir, at half-past four."

"So late as that? It astonishes me! Yesterday morning, I did not think she would have lived out the day."

"No, sir."

"So much the better—'tis a fine subject; I can now make one man happy:" and then, addressing himself to one of the pupils in his suite, "My dear Dunoyer, you have long wished for a subject; you are the first upon my list—I will give you this one."

"Oh! sir, what kindness!"

"I should be glad more frequently to reward your zeal, my dear friend—but mark the subject—take possession of it; there are so many fine young fellows after such a quarry!" And the Doctor passed on.

The pupil, with the aid of a scalpel, very delicately traced an incision upon the arm of the dead actress, of the letters "F. D." Francis Dunoyer, to take possession of it,* as the doctor had told him, and the visit was then continued.

"Lorraine," whispered Jeanne Duport softly, to her neighbor, "who are all those people following the doctor?"

"They are pupils and students."

"Oh! Heaven! will all those young men be here when the physician comes to question me and look at me?"

"Alas! yes."

"But it is in the chest that I suffer—they won't examine me before all these men?"

"Yes, yes, it must be so—they will have it so. I cried enough the first time they did so—I was dying with shame. I resisted—they threatened to send me away; I was obliged to make up my mind to it; but it produced such an effect upon me that I felt worse for it. Only think! almost naked before so many people! it was very painful, I can assure you."

"That the physician should do so, I can comprehend, if it is necessary; and even that is very painful—but why before all these young men?"

"They are studying, and we serve as a lesson to them. We cannot help it—we are here for that—it is upon this condition we are received into the hospital."

"Ah! I understand," said Jeanne Duport, with bitterness—"they give us nothing for nothing; but yet, there are occasions when this could not be. Supposing that my poor Catherine, who is only fifteen years of age, should come to the hospital—would they dare, before all these men—oh! no—I think I would rather see her die in my own house!"

"If she came here, she must submit to it, as the rest, as you—as I have done."

"But let us be quiet, Lorraine; if that poor young lady who is opposite to us, were to hear us—she who, they say, was so rich—she who, perhaps, never left her mother before; it will soon be her turn—only think how confused and unhappy she would feel."

"Gracious! but that's true! I tremble for her even when thinking of it: poor child! Silence, Jeanne," said Lorraine, "here is the doctor."

CHAPTER X. . . . . MADEMOISELLE DE FERMONT.

After having rapidly visited several invalids, who offered nothing either curious or interesting, Doctor Griffon, at last, approached Jeanne Duport. At the sight of this anxious crowd, who, eager to see and learn, pressed round her bed, the unhappy woman, seized with a trembling of fear and shame, wrapped herself tightly in her bed-clothes. The austere and meditative countenance of Doctor Griffon, his penetrating glance, his eyebrows always knit, from habitual reflection—his harsh, impatient, and brief mode of speaking, increased, still more, the fears of Jeanne.

"A new subject," said the doctor, reading the label, on which was inscribed the nature of the malady of the new patient. After that, he cast upon Jeanne a long and investigating look.

There was a profound silence, during which the pupils, in imitation of the *prince of science*, curiously fixed their eyes upon the invalid.

The latter, to avoid, as much as possible, the painful effect caused by the idea of so many eyes being fixed upon her, never took hers off those of the physician, whom she looked at in complete agony. After looking at her attentively for several minutes, the doctor, remarking something peculiar in the yellow tinge which pervaded the patient's eye-ball, went closer to her; and, with the end of his finger, raising the eye-lid, he silently examined the crystalline lens. Several of the pupils, replying to a sort of mute invitation of their professor, went, one after the other, to examine Jeanne's eye. After that, the doctor proceeded to question her in the following manner:

"Your name?"

"Jeanne Duport," murmured the patient, more and more alarmed.

"Your age?"

"Thirty-six years and a half."

"Speak louder, then—the place of your birth?"

"Paris."

"Your profession?"

* No one can be more convinced than we are, of the knowledge and humanity of the studious and enlightened class of young men who devote themselves to an apprenticeship of the healing art. We only desire that some of the professors, who instruct them, would give more frequent examples of that compassionate delicacy, of that charitable mildness of demeanor, which would have such a salutary effect upon the minds of invalids.

"Fringe-maker."

"Are you married?"

"Alas! yes," replied Jeanne, with a profound sigh.

"How long since?"

"Eighteen years."

"Have you any children?"

Here, instead of answering, the poor woman gave free vent to her tears, which she had long restrained.

"Your weeping does not answer my question—again I ask you, have you any children?"

"Two little boys, and a girl fifteen years of age."

He then put several questions to her which it would be impossible for us to relate, but which Jeanne could not answer without much hesitation, and after many severe injunctions from the doctor: the poor woman felt as if dying with shame on being compelled to reply, before so numerous an auditory, to so many indelicate questions.

The doctor, being completely absorbed by his scientific meditations, did not think, in the least, of the painful confusion he was inflicting upon Jeanne; but continued—

"How long have you been ill?"

"Four days," said Jeanne, wiping away her tears.

"Relate to us how your malady first attacked you."

"I beg your pardon, sir, but—there are so many persons—I dare not——"

"Where, in the name of goodness, do you come from?" said the doctor; "you would, I suppose, have me bring a confessional with me. Come, come; speak, and make haste about it. Do n't be uneasy; we are only a family party, though rather a numerous one," added the prince of science, who happened to be, that day, in particular good-humor. "Come, let 's have it."

More and more intimidated, Jeanne hesitated and stammered at every word: "I had, sir—a quarrel—with my husband—regarding my children—that is to say, about my oldest daughter. He wished to take her away from me. You will understand, sir, that I did not like this, on account of a wicked woman with whom he lives, and who might give a bad example to my child; then my husband, who was tipsy—oh! sir, if it had not been for that, he would not have acted so—my husband pushed me very hard—I fell down—and—a short time afterward I began to vomit blood."

"Bah! bah! your husband pushed you and you fell down! you are making the best of it; he certainly did more than to push you—he must have hit you on the stomach very sharply, and several times, too, and perhaps he even trod upon you when you were on the ground. Come, tell us the truth."

"Ah! sir, I assure you that he had been drinking—but for that, he would not have been so brutal."

"Brutal or good, drunk or sober—that is not the question; I am not an examining judge—all I want is to ascertain a fact—you have been thrown down and furiously trampled upon—is not that the case?"

"Alas! sir, yes," said Jeanne, bursting into tears, "and yet I never gave him any cause for complaint; I work as hard as I can, and I——"

"The epigastrium must be very painful; you must feel great heat there?" said the doctor, interrupting Jeanne. "You must feel ill at ease, lassitude, and nausea."

"Yes, sir; I only came here at the last extremity; and when my strength had entirely failed me. Had it not been for that I should not have abandoned my children, and for whom I feel so uneasy—for they have only me; and then Catherine—ah! it is for her, above all, that I feel uneasy. Oh! sir, did you but know—"

"Your tongue!" said Doctor Griffon, again interrupting the patient.

This order appeared so strange to Jeanne, who thought she had excited some compassion in the doctor, that she did not answer him at all, but looked at him with astonishment.

"Come, let us see this tongue, which you make so good a use of," said the doctor, smiling; and then he, with his finger, pushed down Jeanne's nether jaw.

After having made his pupils successively touch and examine the tongue of the patient, for the purpose of proving to them its color and its dryness, the doctor appeared to be considering for a moment. Jeanne, overcoming her fears, said in a trembling voice:

"I wish to tell you, sir, that neighbors of mine, as poor as I am, have been so good as to promise they will take charge of two of my children, but only for eight days. This is doing a great deal. By that time I must be at home again; therefore I beg of you for the love of God, to cure me as quickly as possible—or so far that I may be able to sit up and work. I have only a week before me—for——"

"Face discolored—in a state of complete prostration—and, notwithstanding, pulse strong, hard, and quick," said the doctor, alluding to Jeanne with an imperturbable countenance. "Observe her attentively, gentlemen; oppression and eat in the epigastrium. all these symptoms denounce, positively, a *hisnatsnisa*—probably complicated by a hepatiles, brought on by domestic vexations, which is also indicated by the discoloration of the eye-ball; which, you will observe has a yellow tinge. The subject has received blows in the region of the epigastrium and abdomen; the vomiting of blood has necessarily been occasioned by some organic injury inflicted on certain parts of the viscera. Upon this subject, I shall direct your attention to a singular point—a very singular one. In making postmortem examinations upon those who have died from affections such as this patient is attacked by, we have observed singularly variable results. Sometimes, when the malady is very acute and very serious, it in a few days carries off the patient; and yet no trace of its existence is to be discovered. At other times, the spleen, the liver, and the pancrias, give evidence of injury more or less severe. It is probable that the subject we are now examining has suffered some injuries of that nature; we are, therefore, about to assure ourselves upon this head, and you will ascertain it for yourselves by an attentive examination of the patient;" and with a rapid movement, Doctor Griffon, throwing the clothes to the foot of the bed, completely exposed Jeanne to the public view.

We feel repugnance in describing the painful struggle of this unhappy woman, who, burning with shame, and sobbing, implored the doctor and his assistants to desist. But, upon this threat being pronounced—"You shall be sent out of the hospital if you do not submit to the established rules"—a threat so overpowering to those to whom the hospital is the only and last refuge—Jeanne submitted to a public examination, which lasted a very considerable time; for Doctor Griffon analyzed and explained every symptom, and the most studious among the assistants wished to join practice to theory, and to assure themselves by their own observations of the physical state of the subject.

After this cruel scene, Jeanne was so violently affected that she fell into hysterics, for which the doctor gave an additional prescription. He then continued his round.

The doctor soon arrived at the bed occupied by Mademoiselle Claire de Fermont, a victim, like her mother, to the cupidity of Jacques Ferrand. A fresh and terrible example of the fatal consequences which ensue from a breach of trust;—a crime so slightly punished by the laws!

Mademoiselle de Fermont wore the linen night-cap furnished by the hospital. She was lying with her head languidly pressing the bolster of her bed. Notwithstanding the ravages of sickness, there was still to be observed, in that sweet and open countenance, the traces of high-born beauty. After a night of acute pain, the poor child had fallen into a sort of feverish drowsiness, before the doctor and his scientific followers had entered the ward; nor had the noise made by them yet awakened her.

"A fresh subject, gentlemen," said the prince of science, looking at the ticket which one of the students handed to him. Nature of disease—'slow, nervous fever.' "The deuce!" exclaimed the doctor, with an expression of profound satisfaction—"if the physician on duty has not been misled, this is quite a windfall. I have long desired to meet with a 'slow nervous fever,' for it is not a disease to which the poor are subject. These affections spring mostly from violent perturbations arising from the social position of the subject, and it necessarily follows that the higher the position of the person, the more violent is the perturbation. It is, besides, one of the most remarkable affections, from its peculiar characteristics. It has been known from the earliest antiquity. The writings of Hippocrates leave no doubt upon the matter, and this is perfectly natural, This fever, as I have said, is caused by the most violent affliction—and affliction is coeval with the existence of the world. It is a singular circumstance, however, that before the eighteenth century, this malady was not positively described by any author. It was Huxman, who, from so many causes, did honor to the profession of that period. It was Huxman, as I have said, who was the first to give a description of nervous fevers—a monography which has since become classical; and yet it was a malady, as I may say, of primary formation," added the doctor, laughing. "Ha! ha! ha! It belongs to that great, ancient, and illustrious family, *febris*, the origin of which is enveloped in the night of time. But do not let us be too sanguine. Let us see whether we have really the good fortune to possess a sample of this singular affection. This would be doubly desirable, for I have long had a great desire to experiment by using phosphorus internally. Yes, gentlemen," rejoined the doctor, observing a kind of shuddering curiosity among his auditory—"yes, gentlemen, phosphorus; it is a very interesting experiment which I wish to try—it is a very bold one! But *audaces fortuna juvat*, and the opportunity would be an excellent one. We will, first of all, examine whether the subject will afford us, on every part of its body, but principally on the chest, evidences of that miliary eruption which, according to Huxman, is so symptomatic; and you will assure yourselves, by

passing your hands over the skin, whether you discover that roughness which is the evidence of that eruption. But do not let us sell the lion's skin before we have killed him," added the prince of science, whose hilarity appeared to have increased, and placing his hands on Mademoiselle Fermont's shoulders, he slightly shook her to awake her.

The young girl shuddered, and opened her large eyes, which her disease had sadly hollowed. Her stupefaction and her terror will be readily conceived. While a crowd of men surrounded her bed, intently watching her, she felt the doctor's hand raising the bed-clothes, and endeavoring to take hold of one of hers, that he might feel her pulse. She appeared to exert all her remaining strength to utter a shriek of terror, and exclaimed, "Help, mother, help!"

By an almost providential chance, at the moment when the cries of Mademoiselle de Fermont had made the Count de Saint Remy spring from his chair—for he had recognized her voice—the door of the ward was opened, and a lady, dressed in mourning, entered hurriedly, accompanied by the director of the hospital. That lady was the Marchioness d'Harville.

"For Heaven's sake, sir!" said she, with great anxiety, "conduct me to Mademoiselle de Fermont."

"Will you take the trouble to follow me, madam?" replied the director respectfully. "This young lady is at No. 17, in this ward."

"Unhappy child! here—here!"—said Madam d'Harville, wiping away her tears. "This is too terrible!"

The Marchioness, preceded by the director, rapidly approached the group assembled round the bed of Mademoiselle de Fermont, when she heard these words pronounced with indignation: "I tell you this is a shameful murder! You will kill her, sir!"

"But, my dear Saint Remy; listen to me, then."

"I repeat, sir, that your conduct is atrocious. I consider Mademoiselle de Fermont as my daughter, and I forbid you to approach her. I will immediately have her removed from this place."

"But, my dear friend, this is a case of slow nervous fever; rarely offered. I wished to try phosphorus upon it—this opportunity is *unique*. You must promise me, at all events, that I shall attend her. What does it matter where you take her to, since you deprive my class of so interesting a subject?"

"If you were not a madman, you would be a monster."

Clemence listened to these words with increasing anguish; but the crowd was so compact around the bed, that it was necessary for the director to call out in a loud voice: "Room, gentlemen, if you please; room for the Marchioness d'Harville, who has come to see No. 17."

At these words, the pupils drew back, with as much haste as respectful admiration, on perceiving the lovely face of Clemence, which her emotion had tinged with the most lively hues.

"Madam d'Harville!" exclaimed the Count de Saint Remy, roughly pushing aside the doctor, and hurrying toward Clemence. "Ah! it is Heaven which has sent one of its angels here. Madam, I knew that you felt an interest in these two unfortunate ladies. More fortunate than myself, you have discovered them, while it was chance only that had brought me here, and to be present at a scene of unheard-of barbarity. Unhappy child! Look, madam—look! And you, gentlemen, in the names of your daughters or your sisters, take pity on a child of only sixteen years of age. I entreat you, leave her with Madam d'Harville and these good sisters. When she shall have recovered from her swoon, I will have her taken from this place."

"Well, be it so; I will sign her discharge," cried the doctor, "but I will follow her up. I will keep tight hold of you. It is a subject that belongs to me; and do what you will, I will attend upon her. I will not venture the phosphorus, of course, but I will sit up nights, if it be necessary, as I sat up with you, ungrateful Saint Remy; for this fever is as singular as yours was—they are relations, who have the same right to my interest."

"Horrible man! why have you so much knowledge!" said the Count de Saint Remy, knowing that he could not confide Mademoiselle de Fermont to more skillful hands.

"Is it not quite natural?" whispered the doctor to him. "I have much science, because I make experiments; because I run great risks, and practice a good deal on my patients. Then I am to have my case of slow fever, you ill-natured fellow?"

"Yes; but will it be safe to remove her immediately!"

"Certainly."

"Then, for God's sake, take yourself and your suite away."

"Come, gentlemen," said the prince of science; "our class will be deprived of a most interesting study, but I will keep you informed of all that passes." And Doctor Griffon, accompanied by his auditory, went on his rounds, leaving Mr. de Saint Remy and Madam d'Harville with Mademoiselle de Fermont.

CHAPTER XI.....FLEUR DE MARIE.

During the scene which we have just described, Mademoiselle de Fermont remained in a swoon, and was left to the tender care of Clemence and two nuns. One of them sustained the heavy and almost lifeless head of the young girl, while Madam d'Harville, leaning upon the bed, wiped away with her handkerchief the cold and clammy perspiration which inundated the forehead of the invalid. Mr. de Saint Remy contemplated this picture with feelings of lively emotion, when, all at once, a direful thought crossed his mind; he approached Clemence, and said to her, in a low voice, "And the mother of this unfortunate girl, Madam?"

The Marchioness turned toward M. de St. Remy, and replied to him, with a thrilling expression of deep sorrow, "This child has no longer a mother!"

"God of Heaven! dead?"

"It was only on my return, last night, that I learnt the address of Madam de Fermont, and that her life was despaired of. At one o'clock, this morning, I was at her lodgings with my physician. Ah! sir, what a picture!—misery in all its horrors, and no hope of saving the poor, expiring mother! Her agony must have been frightful, for she had been thinking of her daughter. Her last words were, "My daughter! my daughter!"

"What a death! Good heavens! She, so tender, so devoted a mother! it is really quite horrible!"

One of the sisters of charity interrupted the conversation of Mr. de Saint Remy and Madam d'Harville, and said to the latter, "The young lady is very weak; she hears with difficulty; she may presently come to herself. The shock she received just now has almost destroyed her. If you are not afraid, madam, of remaining here until the patient recovers herself completely, I will offer you my chair."

"Give it me," said Clemence, sitting down by the bed-side, "I shall not leave Mademoiselle de Fermont. I wish, at least, that she should see a face she knows, when she opens her eyes; and afterward I shall take her away with me, as, fortunately, the doctor says she may be removed without danger."

"May you be blessed, madam, for all the good you are doing! but pardon me, if I have not yet told you my name. So much grief—such violent emotions—have quite bewildered me. I am the Count de Saint Remy, madam. The husband of Madam de Fermont was my most intimate friend. I resided at Angers. I left that city in consequence of my uneasiness at not receiving intelligence of these noble and worthy ladies. They had also, up to that time, resided at Angers; and it was reported they had been completely ruined. Their situation was the more painful, as, until then, they had lived in opulence."

"Ah! sir, you do not know all. Madam de Fermont has been basely plundered."

"By her notary, I suppose. I had a long time suspected so myself."

"This man was a perfect monster, sir. Alas! this crime is not the only one that he committed; but happily," said Clemence, exultingly, thinking of Rodolphe, "a providential genius has brought him to account, and I was enabled to close the eyes of Madam de Fermont, assuring her of the future comfort of her child. Her death was, therefore, less painful to her."

"I can well understand that: knowing that her child had you for a protector, my poor friend must have died more tranquilly."

"Not only has Mademoiselle de Fermont acquired my warmest interest in her, but her fortune will be restored to her."

"Her fortune! How can that be? The notary——"

"Has been obliged to refund the money which he had appropriated to himself by a most horrible crime."

"A crime?"

"The wretch had assassinated the brother of Madam de Fermont, in order that it should be believed that the unhappy man had committed suicide, after having squandered the fortune of his sister."

"How horrible! 't is really scarcely credible; and yet, in consequence of my suspicions as to the notary, I had retained some vague doubts as to the reality of the suicide; for Renneville was all honor and loyalty. And the sum which the notary has disgorged?"

"It is deposited in the hands of a venerable priest, the curate of Bonneuville; it will be delivered to Mademoiselle de Fermont."

"This restitution does not suffice for human justice. Madam, the scaffold claims this notary; for he has not committed one murder only, but two; the death of Madam de Fermont, the sufferings which her daughter endures upon this hospital bed, have been caused by the infamous breach of trust, of that miserable wretch."

"And that wretch committed another murder, as frightful and as atrociously contrived."

"What is it you say, madam?"

"If he has rid himself of the brother of Madam de Fermont, by a pretended suicide, that he might, with impunity, enjoy the money he had stolen, 't is only a few days ago, he rid himself of a young girl, whom 't was his interest to make way with, by causing her to be drowned, being certain that her death would be attributed to accident."

Mr. de Saint Remy shuddered, looked at Madam d'Harville with surprise, thinking of Fleur de Marie, and exclaimed, "Gracious Heaven! madam; what a singular coincidence!"

"What is it so much moves you, sir?"

"That young girl! Where was it that he wished to have her drowned?"

"In the Seine, near Asnières, I am told."

"'T is she! 't is she!" cried Mr. de Saint Remy.

"Of whom is it that you speak, sir?"

"Of the young girl that monster wished to murder!"

"Fleur de Marie!"

"Do you know her, madam?"

"Poor child! I loved her tenderly. Ah, sir! did you but know how beautiful and interesting was that girl!—but how is it that——"

"Dr. Griffon and myself were the first to assist her."

"To assist her! oh! where?"

"At the Ravageurs' Island, after she had been saved."

"Saved! Fleur de Marie saved?"

"By an excellent creature, who, at the risk of her own life, dragged her out of the Seine. But what is the matter with you, madam?"

"Ah, sir! I dare not yet believe in so much happiness; I still fear to be the dupe of some misapprehension. Let me entreat you—tell me—this young girl that you speak of, pray describe her to me."

"Of most admirable beauty—an angelic countenance."

"Has she large blue eyes? light hair?"

"Yes, madam."

"Was she with an old woman, when she was drowned?"

"It was only yesterday, that she could speak at all, and she is still very weak; she told us of that circumstance—an aged woman was with her."

"God be thanked!" fervently exclaimed Clemence, clasping her hands. "I can inform him that his lovely charge still lives!* Pardon me, sir; but, did you know how happy the entelligence you have given me, makes me, not only for myself, but for a person who, still more than I, loved and protected Fleur de Marie. But let me intreat you—tell me—where is she at this moment?"

"Near Asnières, in the house of one of the physicians of this hospital, Dr. Griffon, who, notwithstanding some extravagances, possesses excellent qualities. It was to his house that Fleur de Marie was taken, and, since that time, he has attended her with unceasing care."

"And is she out of danger?"

"Yes, madam; but only three days ago; and to-day she will be allowed to return to her protectors."

"Oh! it is I! it is I who will have the care—or, rather, I shall have the delight—of conducting her to those who, having believed her dead, so bitterly lament her loss."

"I can appreciate their grief, madam, for it is impossible to know Fleur de Marie, without becoming spell-bound, by the goodness of that angelic creature; her sweetness and her gracefulness, exercise an undefinable empire over all those who approach her. The woman who saved her, and who has sat up with her, day and night, and watched her as if she had been her own daughter, is of so furious a temper, that she has been surnamed Louve—consider that. Well, one word from Fleur de Marie tames her instantly. I have seen her sobbing, and shrieking with despair, when, after a fresh attack, Dr. Griffon almost despaired of saving the life of Fleur de Marie."

"That does not surprise me; I know Louve."†

"You, madam?" said the Count de Saint Remy, much astonished; "you know Louve?"

"This cannot fail to surprise you, sir," said the Marchioness smiling sweetly; for she was happy—oh! so happy—when thinking of the delightful surprise she was about to afford the Prince. What would have been her ecstacy, had she but known that 't was a daughter, whom he believed dead, that she was about to restore to the arms of Rodolphe! "Ah! sir," said she to Mr. de Saint Remy, "this day is such a happy one to me, that I should wish it to be so to others. It appears to me, that in this place there must be many unfortunate and worthy persons to relieve: it would be an appropriate mode of commemorating the happy news which you have given me." And then, addressing the nun, who had just given a few spoonfuls of a draught to Mademoiselle de Fermont, she said, "My good sister, is she reviving?"

"Not yet, madam; she is so weak. Poor young lady, one can hardly feel the beating of her pulse."

"I will wait here till she is in a fit state to be removed to my carriage. But tell me, sister, among all these unfortunate invalids, do you not know some who are particularly deserving of interest and pity, to whom I might be useful before leaving the hospital?"

"Ah! madam, 't is God has sent you here! There is yonder," pointing to the bed of Pique Vinaigre's sister, "a poor woman who is very ill, and much to be pitied. She did not come here, till after all her strength had left her. She is continually despairing because she has been obliged to leave her little children, who have only her in the world to support them. She was saying just now to the doctor, that, well or ill, she must leave the hospital within eight days, because her neighbors had promised her to take care of her children for a week only; and after that time, they would not be able to provide for them."

"Take me immediately to her bed, I beg of you, my good sister," said Madam d'Harville, rising, and following the nun.

Scarcely recovered from the nervous attack which the examination of Doctor Griffon had occasioned, Jeanne Duport had not perceived the entrance of the Marchioness into the ward. Her astonishment, therefore, was great, when she saw Clemence raise the curtain of her bed, and say to her, with a look of commiserating kindness, "You must no longer allow yourself to be distressed by fears for your children's welfare: I will take them under my care. Only think of getting well, that you may soon return to them."

Jeanne Duport imagined that she was dreaming. In the same place where Doctor Griffon and his studious auditory had made her undergo so cruel an inquisition, she saw a young lady of enchanting beauty, who was addressing her with words of pity, of consolation, and of hope. The emotion of Pique Vinaigre's sister was so great, that she could not pronounce a single word. She clasped her hands together, as if she was praying, and looked with feelings of adoration upon her benefactress.

"Jeanne, Jeanne!" said Lorraine, in a half-whisper to her, "why don't you answer that good lady?" And then Lorraine, addressing herself to the Marchioness, said: "Ah! madam, you can conceive that she would have died of despair, thinking that her poor children were abandoned;—would you not, Jeanne?"

"Let me beg you once more, my good mother, to tranquillize yourself. You need not feel any uneasiness about them," rejoined the Marchioness, pressing between her small and delicate hands the burning hand of Jeanne Duport; "you may feel quite sure they will be taken care of; and even if you wish it, you shall leave the hospital this very day. You shall be well attended to at your own house—you shall want for nothing; and in this way, your children can be always with you. If your lodgings are unhealthy or too small, you shall have more comfortable ones immediately provided for you, so that you may be in one room, and your children in another. You shall have a good nurse, who shall look after them and attend to you at the same time. And when your health is reëstablished, should you not find work, I will give you the means of waiting for it till it does come. From to-day, I will take upon myself to provide for your children's future welfare."

"Gracious God! what do I hear? Cherubims descend, then, from heaven, as we are told in our prayer-books," said Jeanne Duport, almost beside herself with joy, and hardly daring to look her benefactress in the face. "Why should so much goodness be shown to me? what have I done to deserve it? This cannot be possible! Am I to leave this hospital, where I have wept so much, and gone through such sufferings! and never leave my children! and have a nurse? Why, it appears a miracle worked by the Almighty!" and the poor woman spoke the truth.

Oh! that it could be generally understood, how sweet and easy it is to work these miracles, and at such trifling cost!

* Madam d'Harville, who had arrived only the night before, was ignorant that Goualeuse, whom Rodolphe believed dead, was his daughter. Some days before, the Prince, in writing to the Marchioness, had informed her of the new crime committed by the notary, as well as the restitution he had compelled him to make. It was through the exertions of Mr. Badinot, that the address of Madam de Fermont had been discovered.

† In her visit to Saint Lazare, Madam d'Harville had heard the directress of the place, Madam Armand, speak of Louve.

Alas! to persons stricken by poverty, abandoned or rejected by all the world, a sudden and unlooked-for deliverance from misery, accompanied by kind words, by charitable attentions; must not this have—does it not have—the supernatural appearance of a miracle! It was, therefore, *humanely* permitted to Jeanne Duport, to doubt the probability of the unheard-of good fortune which the Marchioness d'Harville promised, and which she never could have even hoped for.

"It is no miracle, my good mother," replied Clemence, very much affected. "What I am doing for you," she added, blushing slightly at the resolution which Rodolphe had dictated—"what I am doing for you has been inspired by a generous spirit, who has taught me to compassionate misfortune. It is him, whom you must thank and bless."

"Ah! madam! I shall always bless both you and yours," said Jeanne Duport, weeping. "I beg your pardon for expressing myself so badly; but I am not accustomed to such great joys! It is the first time that I ever experienced them!"

"Well! do you see, Jeanne," said Lorraine, with much feeling, "there are to be found even among the rich, worthy souls, like Rigolette and Goualeuse; upon a grander scale, it is true! but as to the goodness of heart, 'tis the same in both."

The Marchioness, in great surprise, turned toward Lorraine, on hearing her pronounce these names. "Do you then know Goualeuse, and a young seamstress, called Rigolette?" said Clemence, to Lorraine.

"Yes, madam: Goualeuse, the good little angel! did for me last year—but of course, according to her smaller means—what you are now doing for Jeanne. Yes, madam! it does me good to speak of it, and to repeat it to every one I meet with! Well: Goualeuse took me out of a cellar, where I was lying upon straw, and where I had been just confined, and had me and my infant carried to a room, in which there was a good bed and a cradle. Goualeuse had gone into all these expenses from pure charity; for she scarcely knew me, and was poor herself. Was not that admirable, madam?" said Lorraine, enthusiastically.

"Oh! yes! the charity of the poor toward the poor is great and holy!" said Clemence, her eyes streaming with sweet tears.

"It was the same with Mademoiselle Rigolette, who, according to her small means," continued Lorraine, "offered, only a few days since, her assistance to poor Jeanne."

"What a singular coincidence!" said Clemence, still more moved, for each of these two names, Goualeuse and Rigolette, recalled to her a noble action of Rodolphe; "and you, my child, how can I be of service to you?" said she to Lorraine. "I should wish that the names you have uttered with so much gratitude, should bring good fortune to you, also."

"I thank you, madam," said Lorraine, with a smile of bitter resignation, "I had a child, but it is dead; the malady I suffer from is incurable; it is a confirmed consumption. I have no further need of anything."

"Do not give way to such a fatal idea: at your age, so young as you are, there is always hope."

"Oh! no, madam, I know my fate! I do not complain. Only last night, I saw a person, suffering from the same malady, die in this ward; the death is very gentle. I thank you for your great goodness."

"Your state is, perhaps, not so alarming as you imagine."

"I do not deceive myself, madam; I feel it but too surely; but since you are so good—a great lady, such as you, has so much influence——"

"Speak! tell me what you wish."

"I had asked Jeanne to render me a service; but, as she is going, thanks to you! ——"

"Well, then, tell me—cannot I render you this service?"

"Certainly, madam; a word from you to the sisters, or the physician, would settle it, at once."

"You may be assured, then, that I will say that word. What is it that you desire?"

"Since I saw the actress, who is dead, so dreadfully alarmed at the idea of being dissected, after death, the same fear has taken possession of me. Jeanne had promised me to claim my body, and to have me buried."

"Oh! this is really too dreadful!" said Clemence, shuddering with horror. "One must come here to learn that, for the poor, there is misery and terror even beyond the grave!"

"Pardon, madam!" continued Lorraine; "for a great lady, rich as you are, and as you deserve to be, this request is a most mournful one; I ought not to have made it."

"On the contrary, I thank you for having asked this of me: this has told me of a torture that I was ignorant of: the knowledge of it will not be lost upon me. Be comforted; and, although, I trust, that fatal moment is still far distant, yet, when it does arrive, you may be assured, that you shall repose in consecrated ground."

"Thanks! madam, thanks!" exclaimed Lorraine; "may I dare ask permission to kiss your hand?"

Clemence presented her hand to the parched lips of Lorraine.

"I thank you, madam; I shall now have some one to love and bless, with Goualeuse, to my last moment; and I shall no longer have such dreadful fears for what might happen after death."

This willingness to die, and these fears beyond the tomb, had affected the Marchioness d'Harville most painfully. Leaning toward the sister, who had come to tell her that Mademoiselle de Fermont had completely recovered from her swoon, she whispered to her:

"Is that young woman really in such a state that her life is despaired of?" and, by a sign, she indicated the bed of Lorraine.

"Alas! yes, madam; Lorraine is given over by the physicians; she has not, perhaps, more than eight days to live."

Half an hour afterward, the Marchioness d'Harville, accompanied by the Count de Saint Remy, left the hospital, taking with her the young orphan, from whom she had concealed her mother's death.

On the same day, a confidential person employed by the Marchioness, went to examine the miserable place which Jeanne Duport had lately lived in; where he obtained the most satisfactory information as to the conduct of that worthy woman. She then hired an apartment, consisting of two large and airy rooms, and a small one communicating with them, on the quai d'Ecole, which, in two hours, thanks to the ready resources of the Temple, were comfortably furnished.

The same evening, Jeanne Duport was conveyed to her new residence; where she found, waiting her arrival, her children, and an excellent nurse.

The same person had orders given to him, to claim, and to have buried, the body of Lorraine, when she should fall a victim to her malady.

After having taken Mademoiselle de Fermont to her house, and having arranged everything for her comfort, the Marchioness d'Harville immediately set out for Asnières, accompanied by the Count de Saint Remy, to convey Fleur de Marie to Rodolphe's house.

CHAPTER XII.....HOPE.

The first days of spring were approaching; the sun poured down warmer rays; the sky was clear, and the breezes gentle, when Fleur de Marie, leaning on the arm of the heroic Louve, was trying her strength in the garden of Doctor Griffon.

The reviving warmth of the sun, and the exercise of walking, had called a slight flush to the pale features of Goualeuse. Her peasant's dress having been torn from her by the wild energy of Louve's rescue, she was now clothed in dark-blue merino, hanging loosely upon her form, and confined by a worsted cord around her delicate waist.

"What a delightful sunshine!" said she to Louve, halting at the foot of an arbor of green trees, with a southern exposure, and which arched a stone bench; "if you wish it, Louve, we will sit down here for a moment?"

"Is there any need of asking me if I wish?" replied suddenly the bold wife of the poacher, shrugging her shoulders;—she removed her shawl from her neck, and folding it in four parts, knelt down and placed it on the soft sand of the alley, saying to Goualeuse, "place your feet on that."

"But, Louve," said Goualeuse, who perceived too late the design of her companion, to prevent its execution—"but, Louve, you will spoil your shawl."

"I will have no excuses; the earth is moist," said Louve; and, taking up with authority the little feet of Fleur de Marie, she placed them upon the shawl.

"You will spoil me, Louve."

"You do not deserve to be spoiled; for you are always opposing what I wish to do for your good. Are you not tired? we have been walking for half an hour—the clock of Asnières has just struck twelve."

"I am somewhat fatigued, but I feel that this walk has been of great service to me."

"You confess that you were tired; and why did n't you ask me before to sit down?"

"Do not rebuke me: I did not perceive my fatigue; it is so pleasant to walk, after having been so long a time confined to the bed; to see the sun, the trees, the country, when I never expected to see them again."

"The fact is, that your life was despaired of within the last two days, poor Goualeuse; yes, I can now inform you, that the doctor had no hope of your recovery."

"You must know, that when I found myself beneath the water, I could not help remembering what a wicked woman told me when I was small; when she threatened to throw me to the fishes. Sometime since she also wished to drown me; and then I said to myself, 'I am unfortunate—it is a fatality which I cannot avoid.'"

"Poor Goualeuse! was that your last thought, when you believed yourself lost?"

"Oh no!" said Fleur de Marie, with enthusiasm; "when I knew that I was dying, my last thought was given to him, whom I look up to as my God—and when I felt myself reviving, my first thought was raised toward him!"

"It is a pleasure to do good to you; for you never forget it."

"No! indeed! it is so delightful to go to sleep with feelings of gratitude; and to awaken with them also!"

"One could throw herself into the fire for you!"

"Excellent Louve! I assure you that one of the reasons why I am so happy to live, is the hope that I have of rendering you happy, by fulfilling my promise. You recollect the castles we built in the air at Saint Lazare?"

"As for those, there is time enough yet remaining, now that you are saved. I am abundantly repaid, as my man says."

"I hope that the Count de Saint Remy will soon tell me, that the physician will allow me to write to Madam George; she must be so solicitous about me; and Mr. Rodolphe also;" added Fleur de Marie, casting down her eyes, and blushing anew at the thought of her benefactor; "perhaps they think that I am dead."

"And so do those brigands think, who attempted to drown you."

"You suppose, then, Louve, that it was not an accident?"

"Accident! the Martials call such things accidents;—when I say the Martials, I do not include my husband—for he is not one of the family, no more than François and Amandine will be."

"But what interest could they have in my death? I have never wronged a human being. No one knows me."

"'T is all the same thing; if the Martials are wretches enough to drown people, they are not fools enough to do so without some selfish motive."

"A few words which the widow told my man, after she was put in prison, proved that to me."

"Has he then been to see his mother—that terrible woman!"

"Yes; and there is no hope for her, nor Calebasse, nor Nicholas—they have discovered all their crimes—but the villain Nicholas, with the hope of saving his own life, has denounced his mother and sister, as guilty of another murder; and they will all have to suffer. The lawyers tell them that there is no chance for them. The judges say that an example is necessary."

"Oh! it is awful! A whole family executed!"

"Unless Nicholas escapes—he is in the same prison with a monster called Squelette, who is contriving a plot to escape with several others. Nicholas sent word of it to Martial by a prisoner who was released; for my man has been weak enough to visit his villainous brother at La Force, and encouraged by the visit, that wretch—may he have his deserts!—had the impudence to send word to my man that he might escape at any moment; and that Martial must have some clothes and money ready at father Micou's, by means of which he might conceal himself."

"Your Martial has a kind heart."

"As kind a heart as you please; but, may the devil take me, if I allow my man to assist an assassin who wished to murder him. Martial will not inform of the plan for escape, and that is sufficient; besides, as you are in health again, Goualeuse, we, my man, the children, and myself, will soon start upon our journey. We will never again live in Paris; it was quite painful enough for Martial to be called the son of the guillotined—what will his shame be, when mother, brother, and sister shall have suffered the same fate?"

"You must, at least, wait till I have spoken about you to Mr. Rodolphe, if I see him again. You have given up your evil habits, and I told you that you should be recompensed for it, and I wish to fulfill my word. How can I, in any other manner, repay you for your kindness? You have saved my life, and have been as good as a sister to me during my sickness."

"True! But it would look like selfishness if I allowed you to solicit some reward from your protectors. You are saved, and I repeat it—I am repaid!"

"Good Louve, it is not you who are selfish, but I that am grateful."

"Hark!" said Louve, rising suddenly—"I think that I hear a carriage! Yes! yes! it is coming. Did you not see it pass before the gate? There is a lady in it."

"Good Heaven!" said Fleur de Marie, with emotion. "I thought that I recognized——"

"Who?"

"A young and beautiful lady whom I saw at Saint Lazare, and who has been very kind to me."

"She knows, then, that you are here?"

"I do not know: but she is acquainted with the person of whom I spoke to you; and who, if she wished, and I know that she will, can make real the castles in the air."

"The place of game-keeper for my man, and a cottage for us in the middle of the woods," said Louve, with a sigh—"those are mere dreams; too beautiful to come true."

A sudden noise of footsteps was heard behind the bower. François and Amandine, who, thanks to the kindness of the Count de Saint Remy, had not left Louve, arrived, panting, and crying out:

"Louve! here is a beautiful lady, with the Count de Saint Remy; they wish to see Fleur de Marie immediately."

"I was not mistaken," said Goualeuse.

At the same instant, the Count appeared, accompanied by the Marchioness d'Harville. Hardly had Clemence perceived Fleur de Marie, when she ran hastily to her, and clasping her in her arms, exclaimed: "Dear, dear child! I have found you at last!—saved, miraculously saved from a horrible death!—with what rapture I gaze upon you once more! I, who like your friends, had supposed that you were lost;—we have all mourned for you as dead!"

"I am delighted to meet you again, madam, for I have never forgotten your kindness to me," said Fleur de Marie, responding to the tenderness of the Marchioness, with charming grace and modesty.

"You cannot conceive of the surprise and joy of your friends, who, at this moment, lament you so bitterly."

Fleur de Marie, taking the hand of the brave Louve, who had stepped aside abashed, said, in presenting her to the Marchioness:

"Since my safety is so precious to my benefactors, allow me to solicit their kindness for my poor companion, who saved my life, at the risk of her own."

"Be assured, my child, that your friends will prove to the noble Louve, that it is to her alone, that they are indebted for the happiness of seeing you alive."

Louve, confused and abashed, could make no reply. She did not dare raise her eyes to the Marchioness, so imposing to her was the presence of a lady of such a character, and could scarcely conceal her astonishment, in hearing Clemence pronounce her name.

"But we have not a moment to lose," said the Marchioness; "I am impatient to bear you away, Fleur de Marie; I have in my carriage a shawl and warm cloak. Come, come my child!" then speaking to the Count, she said: "Will you be kind enough to give my address to this courageous woman, that she may call upon me to-morrow, to bid farewell to Fleur de Marie. Thus we shall compel you to come and see us," said the Marchioness to Louve.

"Yes, yes, madam! be sure that I shall go," replied Louve, "since it is to bid farewell to Goualeuse! I should be miserable if I could not embrace her once more."

Within a few moments, Goualeuse and the Marchioness were on the road to Paris.

Rodolphe, after having been present at the death of Jacques Ferrand, who had been so frightfully punished for his crimes, returned to his own mansion, in a state of extreme depression. After a long, sleepless, and distressing night, he had sent to Sir Walter Murph, to confide to this old and faithful friend, the overwhelming discovery which he had the day-before made concerning Fleur de Marie.

The worthy Squire was struck with despondency, for better than any one else, he could comprehend the profundity of the Prince's wo. Rodolphe, with a countenance which expressed the agony he had endured; with eyes moist with recent tears, had just made to Murph the distressing disclosure.

"Courage!" said the squire, wiping his eyes, for, in spite of his phlegm, he had wept. "Yes, courage, my lord! I offer no vain consolation, for your sorrow is incurable."

"You are right: my anguish of yesterday was nothing compared with that of to-day."

"Yesterday, my lord, you experienced the crushing weight of the blow, but the wound it has left will become more painful day by day; therefore, courage! A cloud of impenetrable darkness hangs over your futurity."

"Oh! the contempt and horror with which that woman inspired me yesterday! But may God have pity upon her, she is now in His awful presence! Surprise, disappointment, horror, crushed in my bosom every throb of tenderness; but I can no longer restrain myself. My eyes refused the relief of tears, but in your presence I can weep. Yes, you see how weak and in-

firm I am; but pardon, pardon me! Tears again! tears always! my child—my lost—my beloved child!"

"Weep, weep, my lord! We have no consolation but in tears! The loss is one which can never be repaired!"

"From what a brilliant destiny death has snatched that dear one! What a fate was in reserve for her, which would have buried in oblivion the misery and suffering, that the poor dove of innocence and beauty has endured!"

"The transition might have been too sudden for the unfortunate being, who, in her brief life, encountered nearly every wo to which humanity is heir."

"Oh! no, no! If you can conceive of the caution, the delicacy, the reserve, with which I should have imparted to her the mystery of her birth; how I should have drawn her confiding heart gently toward that revelation; how smooth and even I should have made the path to the discovery! If that was the only obstacle," added the Prince with a bitter smile, "my mind would have been wrapt in delightful composure. No sorrow nor trouble would have marred my unalloyed joy. Kneeling down before that idol of my dreams, toward whom the ungratified yearnings of my heart have always gushed, I should have said to her, 'Be happy—for ever happy, beloved child of suffering. You are my daughter;' but no! Alas, no! this would have been too sudden, too unforeseen, too unexpected. I should have restrained my eager love, and have told her in a calm voice: 'My child, I have a secret to disclose which will greatly astonish you. Imagine that your parents have been discovered; your father is still living; he is before you; I—I am your father, my beloved child!'" The Prince again interrupted. "No, no! even that disclosure would be too sudden; but I cannot avoid it; the revelation will instantly come to my lips. It is essential to enforce upon myself such strong control—you understand my emotions, my old friend; I am sure that you do. To be in the presence of my own, my only child, and be under the necessity of restraining my parental love!" and then, giving away to a new paroxysm of despair, Rodolphe exclaimed: "Of what use are these vain forms of address? I never shall speak to her again! The most frightful feature of the affliction, is the remembrance, that my daughter was once by her father's side for an entire day; during that day—for ever cursed—for ever sacred—when I conducted her to the farm—that day, when the treasures of her angel-like soul were revealed to me in all their purity! I was present at the budding, the blossoming, of her adorable nature, and no voice whispered in my heart, 'It is your daughter—your daughter!' Blind and heartless being, that could not divine the sacred ties between us. I am unworthy to be a father!"

"But, my lord——"

"Was it not in my power," continued the Prince, "never to leave her side? Why did not I, who mourned so grievously the loss of my child, adopt her as my own? Why, instead of committing her to the hands of Madam George, did I not retain her near my heart? I should now have only to have opened my arms to embrace my child. Why—why did I not do it? Because we never do all the good in our power; because we never appreciate a treasure, until it has for ever disappeared; because, instead of elevating at once to her deserved greatness, that excellent image of God, who in spite of misery, abandonment, and wretchedness, was more noble in mind and heart, than if she had never passed triumphantly through her temptations, I even congratulated myself for having placed her on a farm, under the protection of excellent people, as I would have done for the first interesting beggar that crossed my path. It is all my own fault! my own fault! If I had done my duty, she would now have been alive! I am righteously punished! I have deserved it all, for being a bad son and a bad father!"

Murph knew that grief of this nature was inconsolable, and he was silent.

After a long silence, Rodolphe continued, in a voice that was deeply moved, "I will no longer remain here; Paris is hateful to me. To-morrow I will depart."

"You are right, my lord."

"We will take the farm of Bouqueval in our route; I will shut myself up, for a few hours, in the room where my daughter passed the only happy days of her suffering life; there I will gather, with religious care, every relic of her existence—the books, in which she commenced to read, the papers upon which her first lines were traced, the garments that clothed her beloved form, everything, all; even the furniture and the hangings, upon which her eyes frequently fell—of the chamber itself, I myself will make an exact drawing; and in Gerolstein, in the secluded park, where I have raised a monument to the memory of my insulted father, I will build a small tenement, to which that room shall be transferred; there I will retire, to weep for my daughter! One of those melancholy monuments will remind me of my crime against my father, and the other, of the punishment for it, which reached me through my child." After another silence, Rodolphe added, "let everything be prepared for our departure, to-morrow."

Murph, with the motive of driving from the mind of the Prince these distressing reflections, said to him:

"Everything will be prepared, my lord; but you must remember, that the marriage of the son of Madam George and Rigolette, is to be celebrated, at Bouqueval, to-morrow. Not only have you secured to Germain a competency, and given also a magnificent dowry to his bride, but you also promised to attend their marriage, as a witness; and at that time only were they to be informed of the name of their benefactor."

"It is true that I have promised it, and they are now at the farm. I cannot go there to-morrow, without being a witness of that ceremony; and yet, I confess that I have not the courage to do so."

"The sight of those young people's happiness would, perhaps, soothe your sorrow."

"No, no! grief is selfish, and loves solitude. To-morrow you shall bear to them my excuse, and fulfill the duties I had reserved for myself; you will ask Madam George to collect everything, which belonged to my daughter, and to have a drawing of her chamber taken, and forwarded to me in Germany."

"And will you depart, my lord, without bidding adieu to the Marchioness d'Harville?"

At the recollection of Clemence, Rodolphe shuddered. Love, ardent and profound, still lingered in his bosom; but at that moment it seemed extinguished, by the waves of bitterness with which his heart overflowed. By a strange anomaly, the Prince was conscious that the tender affection of the Marchioness could alone alleviate the affliction which had befallen him: and he reproached himself for the thought, as unjust toward the child, whose loss should entirely absorb his mind.

"I must depart without seeing Clemence," replied Rodolphe. "A few days ago, I informed her of my sorrow at Fleur de Marie's death. When she learns that the lost one was my daughter, she will understand that there is grief, or rather a fatal punishment, which we must have the courage to bear alone—yes, entirely alone—in order that it may be the means of expiation; and that which destiny has imposed upon me is terrible—yes, terrible! for it has commenced when the decline of life has also begun."

A light and gentle knock was now heard at the door of Rodolphe's apartment. The Prince made a gesture of impatience. Murph arose, and went to open the door. Through the partly-opened aperture, an aid-de-camp of the Prince spoke a few words to Murph in a low voice. Murph replied with a motion of his head, and, turning to Rodolphe, said: "Will my lord permit me to leave the room a moment? Some one desires to speak with me instantly, on the service of your royal Highness."

"Go," replied the Prince.

Murph had scarcely left the room, when Rodolphe, hiding his face in his hands, sobbed aloud. "Alas!" he exclaimed, "my emotions frighten me! My soul overflows with bitterness and hatred; the presence of my best friend weighs heavily upon me; the remembrance of a noble and pure love assails and troubles me; and again—but this is cowardly and base! yes; I heard last evening, with barbarous joy, of the death of Sarah—that unnatural mother, who has slain my daughter! I am pleased in recalling the horrible agony of the monster, who was the instrument of that crime. Oh, rage! I arrived too late!" he exclaimed, starting on his seat; "and yesterday I did not suffer the anguish of to-day—and yesterday, as to-day, I knew of my daughter's death; but I did not confess to myself those truths, which will henceforth poison my life. I have seen my daughter—I have spoken to her—I have admired all her adorable qualities. How much time I lost at that farm! I only visited her three times, when I might have gone there every day. But what do I say? I might have kept her for ever under the same roof with myself! The thought will be endless torture to me!" And the bereaved man found a cruel pleasure in reviving a thought which was inconsolable; for it is natural for great sorrows constantly to revive themselves in the mind.

The door of the room was suddenly opened, and Murph entered, unnaturally pale—so pallid, that the Prince partially arose and exclaimed:

"Murph, what afflicts you?"

"Nothing, my lord!"

"But you are very pale."

"It is from surprise."

"What surprise?"

"The Marchioness d'Harville."

"Clemence! Good God! what new misfortune impends?"

"No, no, my lord! Be comforted; she is here in the antechamber."

"She here? the Marchioness in my house? it is impossible!"

"It was that which caused me so much surprise."

"In the name of Heaven! what powerful motive could have induced such a step?"

"I know not: but I cannot understand my own emotions."

"You are hiding something from me, Murph."

"Upon my honor! no, my lord! I am only aware of what the Marchioness told me."

"But what did she tell you?"

"'Sir Walter,' and her voice was moved, though her countenance was radiant with joy, 'my presence here must astonish you much; but there are certain circumstances so imperious as to leave but little thought to waste upon propriety. Beg his Highness instantly to grant me a few moments conversation in your presence; for I know that the Prince has no better friend in the world than yourself. I might have begged of him the favor of calling upon me, but it would have caused an hour's delay; and the Prince will be grateful to me for not deferring the interview for a moment,' added she, with an expression, which caused me to start."

"But," said Rodolphe, with a voice tremulous with emotion, and turning even more pale than Murph, "I cannot divine the cause of your emotion, your trouble, your pallor; there must be something more to disclose. That interview——"

"Upon my honor, I know nothing but what I have revealed. These words of the Marchioness, have filled me with anxiety, and I cannot explain the reason. But you, my lord, are very pale."

"I!" said Rodolphe, supporting himself upon a chair, for he felt his knees trembling beneath him.

"I tell you, my lord, that you are as agitated as myself. What can be the cause?"

"If I should die upon the spot, ask the Marchioness to come in."

By a strange sympathy, the sudden and extraordinary visit of the Marchioness had awakened in the mind of the Prince and Murph, the same vague and extravagant hope; but that hope seemed to them so unnatural, that neither would confess it to the other. The Marchioness, followed by Murph, entered the apartment of the Prince.

CHAPTER XIII..... THE FATHER AND THE DAUGHTER.

The Marchioness was ignorant that Fleur de Marie was the daughter of Rodolphe; but overjoyed with the thought of restoring a protegé, in whom he felt such a tender interest, supposed that the child might be introduced without any preliminary precaution. She had left Fleur de Marie in the carriage, because she was not informed whether Rodolphe was willing to reveal his rank to the young girl, by receiving her into his house. But perceiving the dejection of the Prince's countenance, which betrayed his inconsolable despair; observing in his eyes the traces of recent tears, the thought flashed upon the mind of Clemence, that he must have been struck with some calamity, much more severe than the death of Goualeuse. Forgetting the object of her visit, she exclaimed:

"Good Heaven! my lord, what affliction has befallen you?"

"Can you be ignorant of it, Clemence? Alas! all hope has fled. Your haste, and the conversation with me which you have solicited with so much earnestness, suggested the belief——"

"I beg of you not to speak of the business which has drawn me here. In the name of my father whose life you have saved, my lord, I have the right to demand of you the cause of the despondency in which you are plunged. Your pallor, your sorrowful expression, frighten me. Speak, I beseech you, my lord! Speak! have compassion upon my anguish!"

"What relief can it afford? My wo is incurable!"

"Your words increase my alarm. I beg of you to speak, my lord. Sir Walter, inform me from what overwhelming calamity you suffer."

"Since I have informed you of the death of Fleur de Marie," said Rodolphe, in a voice interrupted with sobs, "I have learned that she was my daughter."

"Fleur de Marie your daughter!" exclaimed the astonished Clemence, with an accent which the power of language is feeble to convey.

"Yes; and when but a moment since, you informed me that you wished instantly to see me, to impart to me news which would fill me with joy—pardon my weakness—but I am a father, distracted with grief at the loss of my child, and susceptible to the most delusive and unnatural hopes—for a moment I thought that—but, no no—I see that I was deceived. Excuse me, I am wild with grief!"

Rodolphe, exhausted by the disappointment of his hope, and the sudden vanishing of the illusion, which he had for a moment cherished, fell back upon his seat, hiding his face in his hands.

The Marchioness remained immovable—silent, hardly breathing—by turns cherishing the most unbounded joy, and yielding to fear as to the effect of the overwhelming revelation in her power to make. Her soul rose into religious gratitude to Providence, that he had intrusted her—her, with the mission of announcing to Rodolphe, that his daughter lived, and was restored to his arms. Agitated by emotions so deep and so varied, Clemence could not utter a word. Murph, who had for a moment shared the extravagant hope of the Prince, was now, like him, plunged in despair. The Marchioness, yielding to a sudden impulse of her exalted and grateful soul; lost to the presence of Rodolphe and Murph, fell upon her knees, clasped her hands in prayer, and exclaimed, with an accent which holiness and gratitude alone can give to language:

"Thanks to thee, O my God! for ever blessed be thy holy name. I recognize thy Almighty will. I bless thee, for having selected me as an instrument of imparting to him that his daughter still lives."

Although breathed in a low voice, these words, uttered in a tone of sincerity and devout enthusiasm, reached the ears of Rodolphe and Murph. The Prince lifted his head at the moment Clemence was rising from her knees. It is impossible to describe the expression of the father, while contemplating the countenance of the Marchioness, whose face, lighted with celestial joy, resembled the beauty of angels. Leaning with one hand upon the marble table, and repressing with the other the precipitate beatings of her heart, she replied to a look of Rodolphe, which we renounce all hope of describing, by an affirmative motion of her head, "Below, in my carriage."

If Murph had not thrown himself before the Prince, the unhappy father would have rushed from the room.

"My lord, it might be the death of your child!" exclaimed the Squire, restraining the Prince. "Only yesterday, she left the sick room; as you value her life, no imprudence, my lord!"

"You are right," said Rodolphe, scarcely restraining himself; "you are right; I will be calm; I will not see her until my first emotions have subsided—it is too overwhelming," added he, in a fainting voice. Then, addressing the Marchioness, and extending to her his hand, he said, with a burst of indescribable gratitude:

"My pardon is sealed! You are the angel of my redemption!"

"My lord, you restored my father, and God has willed that I should restore your child," replied Clemence; "but, in my turn, I must beg your pardon for my weakness; for this sudden and unexpected revelation has overpowered me. I confess that I have not sufficient courage to introduce Fleur de Marie; my emotion would frighten her."

"And how was she saved? Who saved her?" exclaimed Rodolphe. "Bear witness of my ingratitude; for I have not even asked those questions."

"She was drawn from the water by a courageous woman."

"Do you know her?"

"She will come to my house, to-morrow."

"My debt of obligation is immense; but I shall know how to repay it."

"What a blessed inspiration it was, that warned me not to bring Fleur de Marie with me; the scene might have been fatal."

"It is true, madam; 't was a providential interference, that she was not brought here."

"I knew not whether my lord was desirous of disclosing his rank to her, and I did not wish to present her without consulting him."

"Now," said the Prince, who had passed a few moments in subduing his agitation, and whose countenance appeared almost calm; "now I am master of myself, I assure you. Go, Murph, and bring my daughter."

The words, "my daughter," were spoken in an accent impossible to convey.

"My lord, are you well assured of your own composure? No imprudence, I beg."

"Depend upon me; I know the danger, and would not expose her to it; but I beg of you, my good Murph, to go—go."

"Have no fears, my lady," said Murph, who had observed the Prince; "my lord will now restrain himself."

"Then go; go quick, my old friend."

"Yes, my lord; I only ask for a moment's delay; I am not made of iron myself," said the good squire, wiping the tears from his eyes; "she must not see that I have wept."

"Excellent man!" continued Rodolphe, pressing the hand of Murph in his own.

"Come, come, my lord, I am going; I did not wish to pass the ante-chamber, weeping like a Magdalen;" and the squire advanced toward the door; but again turning round, said, "but my lord, what shall I tell her?"

"Yes, what shall he say to her?" asked the Prince of Clemence.

"Tell her only that Mr. Rodolphe desires to see her—nothing more."

"Certainly; Mr. Rodolphe desires to see her—nothing more. Come, go!"

"It is precisely the best thing to say to her," said the squire, who was no less affected than the Marchioness. "I will merely say to her, that Mr. Rodolphe desires to see her, and that will excite no suspicion. That is the most reasonable announcement;" and Murph did not move.

'Sir Walter," said Clemence to him, smiling, "you are afraid."

"It is true, Marchioness, in spite of my six feet and stalwart form, I am still under the impression of deep emotion."

"Beware, my friend! delay for a moment longer, if you are not sure of yourself."

"I think I have now command of myself," said the squire, after having passed his brawny hands over his eyes: "at my age, such weakness is perfectly ridiculous. Fear nothing, my lord;" and Murph left the room with a firm step and a calm face.

A moment of silence followed his departure. It was not until this moment, that Clemence reflected that she was at the house of Rodolphe, and alone with him.

The Prince now approached her, and said, almost with timidity:

"If I select this day and this moment to make a sincere declaration of my love, it is because this day and this moment will add so much to the solemnity of the avowal. From the first time I saw you, I have loved you. So long as it was necessary to conceal that love, I concealed it: now, you are free. You have restored to me my daughter—will you consent to become her mother?"

"I! my lord!" exclaimed the Marchioness.

"I entreat you not to refuse my request. It is in your power to signalize this day as the commencement of the happiness of my future life."

Clemence had, for a long time, loved the Prince with ardor. The confession of Rodolphe, so simple, so serious, and so tender, uttered under circumstances which gave it so much solemnity, transported her with unexpected joy.

"It belongs to me, my lord, to remind you of the disparity of our rank, and the interests of your sovereignty."

"Allow me to think, before everything, of the interests of my heart and of my beloved daughter. Render us both happy, in order that I, who, a moment since, was without a family, may say, 'My wife—my daughter.' Accept, finally, that this poor child, who, a moment since, was as bereft as myself, may exclaim, 'My mother—my father—my sister;' for you have a daughter, who will be mine also."

"To such noble words, my lord, I can only respond with tears of gratitude," exclaimed Clemence; but restraining her emotions, she suddenly added, "My lord, some one approaches: it is your daughter!"

"Do not refuse my petition," said Rodolphe, in a supplicating tone; "in the name of my love, I beseech you to say *our* daughter!"

"Our daughter," murmured Clemence, as Murph introduced Fleur de Marie into the presence of her father.

The young girl, having alighted from the carriage of the Marchioness before the peristyle of that immense hotel, had passed through the first ante-chamber, filled with footmen in full livery—through the waiting-hall, where the valets-de-chambre were stationed—through the apartment assigned to the ushers—and finally, through the hall of service, occupied by the chamberlain and aid-de-camp of the Prince, in full uniform. Let the reader imagine the astonishment of poor Goualeuse, who knew of no other splendors than those of the farm of Bouqueval, while passing through this princely suite, dazzling with gold, with paintings and mirrors. The moment she made her appearance, the Marchioness ran to her, took her by one hand, and, passing her arm around her in order to support her form, she led her to Rodolphe, who was standing by the fire-place, and unable to move.

Murph, after having confided Fleur de Marie to the Marchioness d'Harville, hastened to conceal himself partially behind one of the immense curtains of the window; not, by any means, sure that his composure was equal to the scene about to transpire. At the sight of her protector, her benefactor, her saviour, Fleur de Marie, already surprised and agitated, trembled violently

"Have courage, my child," said the Marchioness to her, "here is your friend, Mr. Rodolphe, who has been impatiently waiting for you; he has been extremely anxious on your account."

"Oh! yes, yes, very—very—anxious!" stammered Rodolphe, immovable, whose heart was almost breaking at the sight of the pale and mild countenance of his daughter. In spite of his resolution, and power of self-control, the Prince was obliged to turn his head aside, to conceal his emotion.

"You are still very weak, my child; be seated, I pray you," said Clemence, in order to divert the attention of Fleur de Marie: and she conducted her to a large fauteuil of gilded wood, in which Goualeuse seated herself with precaution. Her agitation perceptibly increased; she was oppressed; her voice faltered—she was grieved that she could not speak a word of gratitude to Rodolphe. Upon a signal from the Marchioness, who, leaning upon the fauteuil, was bending toward Fleur de Marie, holding one of her hands in her own, the Prince gently approached upon the other side of the chair, and, having assumed all the control he could summon, he said to Fleur de Marie, who turned toward him her enchanting face:

"At length, my child, you are for ever united to your friends; you never shall be separated from them again: and, above all, you must forget your past sufferings."

"Yes, my child; the best way to prove to us your love, is to forget that melancholy past."

"Believe me, Mr. Rodolphe, believe me, madam—if the past occasionally recurs to my mind, it is for the purpose of saying, that, without you, I should still be miserable."

"But we shall henceforth treat you in such a manner that you will no longer have those gloomy thoughts; our love will not leave you time, my dear Marie," said Rodolphe; "for, you know, I gave you that name at the farm."

"Yes, Mr. Rodolphe: and is Madam George well, who allowed me to call her my mother—is she well?"

"Very well, my child; but I have important news to communicate to you."

"To me, Mr. Rodolphe!"

"Since I last saw you, we have made important discoveries respecting your family."

"About my family?"

"We have discovered your parents; we know your father." Rodolphe's voice was so affected in uttering these words, that Fleur de Marie, in great agitation, turned toward him. He was, fortunately, able to conceal his emotion.

A half-burlesque incident, abstracted also the attention of the child from the agitation of her father. The worthy squire, who was still in his place of concealment, pretending to examine attentively the garden of the hotel, was compelled to resort to his handkerchief, for he cried like a child.

"Yes, my dear Marie," exclaimed Clemence, "your father is known; he is still living."

"My father!" exclaimed Goualeuse, with an accent which subjected Rodolphe's firmness to a new trial.

"And some day, very soon, perhaps, you will see him. What will doubtless astonish you is, that he is of exalted and of very noble family."

"And shall I see my mother?"

"Your father will answer that question, my child. Will you not be rejoiced to see him?"

"Oh, yes, madam!" responded Fleur de Marie, casting down her eyes.

"How much you will love him."

"From that a new life will commence; will it not be so, Marie?" added the Prince.

"Oh, no, Mr. Rodolphe!" replied Goualeuse, artlessly: "my new life commenced when you took pity upon me: when you removed me to the farm. I do not know him; but to you I owe everything, Mr. Rodolphe."

"You love me then as much, perhaps more, than you would your father."

"I bless you, and respect you, as a superior being; for you have done for me what He only could do," replied Goualeuse, with enthusiasm, forgetting her habitual timidity. "When the Marchioness had the kindness to speak to me in prison, I told her the same; and I have told it to everybody. Yes! to those who were unhappy, I said, 'Hope! for Mr. Rodolphe comforts the unfortunate!' To those who hesitated between good and evil, I said, 'Be virtuous! Mr. Rodolphe rewards the virtuous!'

To those who were wicked, I said, 'Beware! Mr. Rodolphe punishes the wicked!' In short, when I was dying, I said to myself, 'God will have mercy upon me, for Mr. Rodolphe has judged me worthy of his interest.'" Fleur de Marie, carried away by gratitude toward her benefactor, had overcome her fear; her cheeks were slightly flushed, and her beautiful blue eyes, which she raised to Heaven, as if she had been in prayer, shone forth with the most angelic expression.

A silence of a few seconds succeeded this burst of Fleur de Marie's enthusiasm. The emotion of the actors of this scene, was profound.

"I see, my child," said Rodolphe, unable to suppress his joy, "that I have almost taken the place of your father, in your heart."

"It is not my fault, Mr. Rodolphe; it is perhaps wrong in me; but I know you, and do not know my father;" and she added, bending her head in confusion, "*You* know the past, Mr. Rodolphe, and have lavished your kindness upon me, notwithstanding; but my father is ignorant of the past; and he will, perhaps, regret having found me again," said the unfortunate child, shuddering. "And since, as the Marchioness says, he is of a noble family, he will undoubtedly be ashamed, and blush on account of me."

"Blush for you!" said Rodolphe, raising his head, and assuming an air of pride and dignity. "Be assured, my dear child, your father will place you in a position so brilliant and exalted, that the greatest of the great will look upon you with the profoundest respect. Blush for you? never! After the queens to whom you are allied by blood, you will walk side by side with the noblest princesses of Europe."

"My lord!" exclaimed Clemence and Murph, simultaneously, who were frightened at the increasing enthusiasm of Rodolphe, and the paleness of Fleur de Marie, who looked toward her father in astonishment.

"Blush for you!" he continued; "if I was ever proud and pleased with my sovereign rank, it is, because it places it in my power to exalt you as high as you have been depressed. Do you hear, my beloved child! my adored daughter! It is I—it is I who am your father!" and the Prince, unable longer to restrain his emotions, threw himself at the feet of Fleur de Marie, whom he covered with tears and caresses.

"Blessed be my God!" exclaimed Fleur de Marie, clasping her hands, "that I am permitted to love my benefactor with that singleness of heart with which I have ever loved him! He is my father. My soul can cherish him without remorse! Blessed be my——"

She could not finish the sentence. The shock was too violent; and Fleur de Marie fainted in the arms of the Prince.

Murph hastened to the door of the room, opened it, and said: "Call for the physician of his royal Highness. Some one is fainting."

"A curse upon me! I have killed her! I have killed her!" exclaimed Rodolphe, sobbing and kneeling before his daughter. "Marie, Marie, my child, hear me. It is your father who speaks. Pardon me! Oh, pardon me! for being unable to hide the secret longer. Alas! I have killed her!"

"Be calm, my lord," said Clemence. "I presume that there is no danger. See, there is still color in her cheek. It is excitement, merely."

"But scarcely recovered from sickness, the blow will kill her. Wo! wo to me!"

At this moment, David, the physician, entered, holding in his hands a case filled with flaçons, and a paper which he gave to Murph.

"David, my daughter is dying! I have saved your life; you must save my child's!" exclaimed Rodolphe.

Stupefied at these words of the Prince, the physician hastened to Fleur de Marie, whom the Marchioness held in her arms, felt of the pulse of the young girl, placed his hand upon her forehead, and turning to Rodolphe, who, pale and agitated awaited his opinion, said: "There is no danger. Let your Highness be reassured."

"Do you speak the truth? Is there no danger, whatever?"

"None, my lord. A few drops of ether will cure the attack."

"Thank you, David; my good David!" exclaimed the Prince with emotion, and addressing Clemence, added: "She lives! Our daughter will live!"

Murph had just cast his eyes upon the paper which David had delivered. He shuddered, and looked at the Prince with fear.

"Yes, my old friend," continued Rodolphe, "in a short time my daughter will be able to say to the Marchioness, 'My mother.'"

"My lord," said Murph, trembling, "the news of yesterday was false!"

"What do you say?"

"A violent fit, followed by a syncope, imposed upon her friends the belief that the Countess Sarah was dead."

"The Countess?"

"This morning, they hoped to be able to save her life."

"Oh, my God!" exclaimed the Prince, terrified; while Clemence, looking upon him in amazement, could not understand the cause of his emotion.

"My lord," said David, occupied with Fleur de Marie, "there is not the least danger; but she needs more air; the chair might be rolled out upon the terrace, and the door of the garden opened, when her faintness would be relieved."

Murph hastened to open a door upon an immense gallery, which formed a terrace; and, with the assistance of David, rolled gently the chair, in which the inanimate form of Fleur de Marie reposed.

Rodolphe and Clemence were left alone.

CHAPTER XIV..... THE SACRIFICE.

"Alas! madam!" exclaimed Rodolphe, the moment Murph and David left the room, "you do not know who the Countess Sarah is—she is the mother of Fleur de Marie!"

"Good Heaven!"

"And I thought that she was dead."

A profound silence ensued.

The Marchioness became deadly pale; her heart was broken!

"You do not know, that this selfish and ambitious woman, attached to me only as a prince, was united to me by a marriage which was subsequently annulled; desirous of marrying again, the Countess has been the main-spring of all the misfortunes which have befallen her child, by abandoning her to mercenary hands."

"Alas! now, my lord, I understand your aversion to her."

"You understand, also, why she wished, twice, to ruin you by infamous accusations; always under the influence of a merciless ambition, and firm to the relentless purpose of winning me back to herself, by breaking every endearment which interested my heart."

"What an infamous design!"

"And she is still alive."

"My lord, this regret is unworthy of you."

"But you are not aware of all the evils she has caused me. This very moment, when, upon the discovery of my daughter, I was about to give her a mother worthy of her—alas! alas! that woman is a demon of vengeance, who will pursue me for ever!"

"Have courage, my lord," said Clemence, wiping the tears, which flowed in spite of her; "you have a holy duty to fulfill; you have yourself said it, in a just and generous impulse of paternal love, 'Henceforth the situation of your daughter must be as exalted as it has been abased; she must be as happy as she has been miserable.' For that purpose, my lord, you must legitimatize her birth; for that purpose you must marry the Countess McGregor."

"Never! never! It would be to reward the perjury, the selfish and ferocious ambition, of that unnatural mother! I will acknowledge my daughter; you will adopt her, and she will find in you an affectionate mother."

"No, my lord, you will not do it; you must not have a shadow rest upon the birth of your child. The Countess Sarah is of noble and ancient family; the alliance is, doubtless, unsuited to your rank, but it is still honorable. By that marriage, your daughter will not only secure all the rights of her birth, but will be, in the eye of the law, legitimate; and thus, whatever her future life may be, she will be proud of her father, and own, without shame, her mother."

"But how can I renounce you? that sacrifice my heart never can endure! You cannot conceive of the happiness of my life, divided between you and my daughter, the only two persons I love in this world."

"You have still your child, my lord; God has miraculously restored her. It would be base ingratitude in you, not to regard your happiness as complete."

"Alas! your love for me, is not mine for you."

"Believe it, believe it, my lord; the sacrifice which you make to your duty, will seem to you less painful."

"But, if you love me, if your regrets are as bitter as mine, what happiness will remain for you?"

"Charity, my lord; this admirable sentiment, which you have awakened in my heart—that sentiment which has, thus far, made me forget so many sorrows; and to which I am indebted for so many sweet and tender consolations."

"I beseech you to listen to me; I will marry that woman; but

when the sacrifice has been consummated, will it be possible for me to live with her, who inspires me with nothing but aversion and contempt! No, no; we shall for ever remain separated; she shall never see my daughter; and thus Fleur de Marie will be deprived of you, the kindest of mothers."

"She will still have the kindest of fathers. By that marriage she will be made the legitimate daughter of a sovereign prince of Europe; and, to use your own words, her situation will be henceforth as brilliant as it has previously been obscure."

"You have no mercy! I am most wretched!"

"How dare you speak those words! you, who are so great, so renowned; you, who so fully understand the duties of devotion and self-denial. Before this providential revelation, when you wept for your daughter with such distressing sobs, if you had been told to express a wish, and it should be granted, you would have exclaimed, 'My daughter! my daughter! oh! let her live!' The miracle has been fulfilled; your daughter has been restored, and you still pronounce yourself unhappy! Let not Fleur de Marie hear you, my lord."

"You are right," said Rodolphe, after a long silence. "So much happiness would have been to me heaven upon earth, and that I do not deserve. I will do what my duty demands; I only regret my hesitation. I owe to it an additional proof of the beauty and noble sentiments of your soul."

"It is you who have aggrandized and elevated that soul; if what I do is right, it is your name which I praise, as I have always done, for the thoughts which you have inspired. Courage, my lord; as soon as Marie can endure the journey, take her to Germany with you. Once in that calm and retired country, her transformation will be complete, and the past will seem to her only like a distant and gloomy dream."

"But you?—but you?"

"As for myself, I can tell you now, what I shall always be able to say with joy and pride. My love for you will be my guardian angel, my support, my all. The good which I shall do, will proceed from and return to it. I will write to you daily: excuse the request, for it is the only one which I shall allow myself to make. You, my lord, will sometimes reply to me, to give me information concerning her whom, for a moment at least, I have called my daughter," said Clemence, unable to restrain her tears, "and who will be so for ever in my thoughts; and finally, when age shall have given us the right to own the unalterable affection which binds us, I promise you, in your daughter's name, that I will, if you desire it, retire to Germany, and reside in the same city with yourself, to part from you no more; and thus terminate a life, which might have been passed more in consonance with our affections, but which will have been at least worthy and honorable."

"My lord," exclaimed Murph, entering quickly, "she whom God has restored to you, is reviving. Her first words were, 'My father!' She wishes to see you."

A few moments after, the Marchioness left the hotel of the Prince, and he went to the residence of the Countess McGregor, accompanied by Sir Walter Murph, the Baron de Graün, and one of his aids.

CHAPTER XV. ..... THE MARRIAGE.

Since Rodolphe had informed the Countess Sarah McGregor of the death of Fleur de Marie, tortured by late remorse, the unnatural mother had been the victim of violent nervous attacks and frightful delirium. Her wound, which had been partially closed, opened again, and a long syncope into which she fell, had induced the belief that she was dead. Her strong constitution, however, triumphed over this severe trial, and a new spark of life reanimated her feeble frame. Seated in an arm-chair, in order to relieve her oppressed breathing, she had been for some moments entirely absorbed in overwhelming reflections—almost praying for that death from which she had just escaped. Thomas Seyton suddenly entered the apartment of the Countess, and concealed with difficulty his profound emotion. With a sign of his hand, he ordered the attendants of his sister to depart, while she was scarcely conscious of the presence of her brother.

"How do you feel at present?" said he to her.

"As weak as ever, and at intervals a painful suffocation. Why did not God remove me from the world during my last attack?"

"Sarah," said Thomas Seyton, after a moment's silence, "you are on the verge of the grave. A violent emotion would either kill or save you."

"I have no more emotions to fear, my brother."

"Perhaps."

"The death of Rodolphe would find me indifferent. The apparition of my daughter, who was slain by my guilt, is ever before me. This is not an emotion, but an incessant remorse. I have now the true feelings of a mother, since I have lost my child."

"I should prefer to observe in you that calculating ambition, which made you regard your daughter as an instrument for making real the dream of your life."

"The terrible reproaches of the Prince have destroyed that ambition. Maternal feelings awoke in my bosom, at the picture which he drew of the awful misery of my child."

Seyton, in a hesitating manner, and weighing each word, now said: "Suppose an impossible occurrence, a miracle—suppose you should learn that your daughter still lives; how would that discovery affect you?"

"I should die in despair and shame, at the sight of her!"

"Do not believe so; the triumph of your ambition would revive you; for, if your daughter lived, the Prince would marry you, as he has already said."

"Admitting this idle supposition, it seems to me that I should have no right to live, after having received the hand of the Prince; my duty would be to deliver him from an unworthy wife, and my daughter from an unnatural mother."

The embarrassment of Thomas Seyton increased every moment. Instructed by Rodolphe, who was in an adjoining room, to inform Sarah that Fleur de Marie was living, he knew not what course to adopt. The life of the Countess was so frail, that it might be blown away by a breath. There was, therefore, no time to deliberate upon this marriage, *in extremis*, which was to legitimate Fleur de Marie's birth. For this sad ceremony, Rodolphe had caused himself to be accompanied with a clergyman, and Murph and the Baron de Graün, as witnesses. The Duke de Lucenay and Lord Douglas, hastily informed of the marriage in contemplation, by Seyton, had arrived that moment as witnesses, on the part of the Countess. Time was precious; but remorse, mingled with parental tenderness, which had, in Sarah's mind, usurped the place of her merciless ambition, rendered the task of the brother still more difficult. His only hope was, that his sister either deceived him, or deceived herself; and that the pride of her nature would revive, the moment she touched the crown, to which she had so long aspired.

"My sister!" said Thomas Seyton, in a grave and solemn voice, "I am in great perplexity; one word from me might either be the means of your death or your restoration."

"I have told you that there is no emotion which I can dread."

"But one!"

"What?"

"If it should concern your daughter?"

"My daughter is dead."

"But if she still lived!"

"We have just exhausted that supposition. Enough, my brother—my remorse is already sufficiently keen!"

"But, if it were not a mere hypothesis;—if, by an incredible, an unexpected Providence, your daughter was saved from death? If she was alive?"

"You torture me! Do not speak to me thus!"

"May God pardon me, and judge you! She is still alive!"

"My daughter!"

"She lives! I tell you! The Prince is here, with a minister. I have sent for two of your friends to act as witnesses. The wish of your life is at length gratified; the prediction is fulfilled! you are a sovereign!"

Thomas Seyton uttered these words, while fastening upon his sister a gaze of great anxiety; watching for each sign of emotion. To his great surprise, the face of Sarah remained almost impassible. She merely placed both of her hands upon her heart, and leaning back upon her fauteuil, suppressed a slight shriek, which seemed to have been wrung from her by a violent pain; after which, her countenance assumed its wonted calmness.

"What affects you, my sister?"

"Nothing but surprise and unexpected joy! My wish is, at length, gratified!"

"I was not deceived," thought Thomas Seyton. "Ambition predominates; she is saved;" and addressing Sarah, he said; "What did I tell you, my sister?"

"You were right," said she with a bitter smile, interpreting the thought of her brother. "Ambition has once again stifled the feelings of maternity."

"You will live, and you will love your daughter."

"I doubt not that I shall live. Behold how composed I am."

"And is this composure real?"

"In the feeble condition of my body, where could I find the strength to feign it?"

"You now understand the reason of my hesitation."

"I am not astonished at it; for you were aware of my ambition. Where is the Prince?"

"He is here."

"I should wish to see him before the ceremony;" and then added, with assumed indifference: "My daughter is there, also, I suppose?"

"No. You will see her upon some other occasion."

"I shall have time, I am confident. I pray you inform the Prince that I wish to see him."

"My sister, I know not how to act. The expression of your countenance is ominous."

"Would you have me laugh? Do you suppose that gratified ambition displays itself in tears or laughter? Summon the Prince, I beseech you."

Seyton was terrified, in spite of himself, at the composure of Sarah. He thought, that he discovered in her eyes the moisture of restrained tears. After a moment's hesitation, he opened the door, which he did not close behind him, and left the room.

"Now," said Sarah, "if I can see and embrace my daughter, I shall be contented. The request will be difficult to obtain. Rodolphe will refuse it as a punishment; but I must succeed. Here he comes."

Rodolphe entered and closed the door.

"Has your brother informed you of everything?" asked the Prince coolly of Sarah.

"Everything."

"Is your ambition gratified?"

"It is gratified."

"The minister and the witnesses are in attendance."

"I know it."

"They may now be allowed to enter, I suppose?"

"One word, my lord."

"Speak, madam."

"I wish to see my daughter."

"It is impossible."

"I tell you, my lord, that I must see my daughter."

"She is hardly recovered from a violent shock which she experienced this morning, and another interview would prove fatal."

"She must, at least, embrace her mother!"

"For what purpose? You are now, in fact, a sovereign Princess."

"I am not yet so, nor will I be until I have embraced my daughter."

Rodolphe looked at the Countess with an expression of surprise and tenderness.

"How! will you postpone the gratification of your pride——"

"To the gratification of maternal affection. It may surprise you, my lord."

"It does, indeed."

"Shall I see my daughter?"

"But——"

"Beware, my lord! My moments are numbered! This last excitement may save, but it may also kill me. I am gathering all my strength—all my energy—and I need much, to struggle against the emotions produced by such a development. I wish to see my daughter, and upon no other condition will I accept your hand; and, if I should die, her birth can never be legitimated."

"Fleur de Marie is not here, and it would be necessary to send for her to my house."

"Send for her instantly, and I consent to everything! my seconds are already numbered, as I have told you; the marriage can be celebrated while Fleur de Marie is on her way."

"Although this sentiment astonishes me, it is too praiseworthy to be disregarded. You shall see Fleur de Marie; I will write to her."

"There, on that table, at which I was stabbed."

While Rodolphe was hastily writing a few lines, the Countess wiped the cold perspiration from her brow. Her countenance, which, until this moment, had been calm, now betrayed violent and concealed agony. It appeared that Sarah, in ceasing to restrain her feelings, was reposing from a painful dissimulation. Rodolphe having finished writing, arose, and said to the Countess, "I will send this letter to my daughter by the hands of one of my aids; she will be here within half an hour. May I now introduce the minister and the witnesses?"

"You may do so; or rather, I beseech you to ring. Do not leave me alone. Charge Sir Walter with the commission; he will introduce the minister and the witnesses."

Rodolphe rang the bell, and one of Sarah's maids appeared.

"Ask my brother to send here Sir Walter Murph," said the Countess.

The maid left the room.

"This is a sad union, Rodolphe," said the Countess, bitterly; "sad to me; for you it will be happy."

The Prince started.

"It will be happy for you, for the bride will not survive it."

At that moment Murph entered.

"My friend," said Rodolphe, "dispatch this letter instantly to my daughter, by the Colonel; he will return with her in my carriage. Ask the minister and the witnesses to enter the adjoining room."

"Oh, my God!" exclaimed Sarah, in a suppliant tone, when Murph had disappeared, "grant that I may have strength enough to see her! let me not die before I have embraced her!"

"Why have you not always cherished this maternal tenderness?"

"Thanks to you! I am now acquainted with repentance, devotion, and self-denial. Yes: when, a moment since, my brother informed me that our daughter was living—allow me to call her *our* daughter, for I shall not use that word long—I felt a terrible pain at my heart; it was the blow of death! I concealed it, but I was happy. The birth of our child will be legitimated, and I shall die."

"Do not speak thus."

"I do not deceive you *now*; you will see."

"What! is there not a remnant of that implacable ambition which has ruined you? Why has fate willed that your repentance should come so late?"

"It is late, but profound, sincere: I swear it to you. If, at this solemn moment, I bless God for removing me from this world, it is because my life would have been a burden to you."

"I beseech you, Sarah——"

"Rodolphe, one last request—your hand."

The Prince, turning his eyes aside, gave it to the Countess, who quickly took it in hers.

"Your hands are cold!" exclaimed Rodolphe, with a shudder.

"Yes, I feel that I am dying! Perhaps, as a final punishment, God will not allow me to embrace my daughter!"

"Oh, yes, yes! his compassion will be moved by your remorse."

"And are not you moved by them, my friend? I beseech you to say that you forgive me! You will not be able to pardon me in the presence of our daughter; it would be to inform her of the guilt of her mother, and that you will never do. When I am in the world of spirits, her love for her mother will be no injury to you."

"Be comforted; she shall know nothing of it."

"Pardon me! pardon me, Rodolphe! will you be pitiless? Am I not sufficiently punished?"

"May God pardon the evil you have done to your child, as I pardon that which you have done to me!"

"Do you forgive me in the sincerity of your heart?"

"With all my heart!" said the Prince with emotion.

The Countess eagerly pressed the hand of the Prince to her lips, with an impulse of joy and gratitude, and then said: "Ask the minister to come in, and request him not to leave, for I am conscious that I am about to die."

The scene was distressing. Rodolphe opened the door; the minister entered, followed by Murph and Baron de Graün, witnesses of Rodolphe, and the Duke de Lucenay, and Lord Douglas, witnesses on the part of the Countess, accompanied by Thomas Seyton. All the actors of the painful scene were melancholy and thoughtful. The Duke de Lucenay had forgotten his habitual eccentricity.

The contract of marriage between the high and puissant Prince, his royal Highness, Gustavus Rodolphe, the fifth, reigning Grand Duke of Gerolstein, and Sarah Seyton, of Halsbury, Countess of McGregor, (a contract to legitimate the birth of Fleur de Marie,) had been prepared by Baron de Graün, and having been read by him, was signed by the parties and their witnesses.

In spite of the repentance of the Countess, when the minister said to Rodolphe, in a loud and solemn voice, "Does your royal Highness consent to take as your wife, Madam Sarah Seyton, of Halsbury, Countess of McGregor," and the Prince replied, "Yes," in a firm voice, the dying eye of Sarah sparkled with unnatural brilliancy; a rapid and fleeting expression of triumph passed over her features. It was the last ray of that ambition which was expiring with her.

During this sad and imposing ceremony, not a word was exchanged between those who were present; and when it was concluded, Lord Douglas and the Duke de Lucenay approached the Prince in silence, bowed respectfully, and left the room. Upon a signal from Rodolphe, Murph and de Graün followed them.

"My brother," said Sarah, in a low voice, "ask the minister to accompany you into the next room, and to be kind enough to wait there for a moment."

"You are very pale, my sister."

"I am now sure to live! Am I not Grand Duchess of Gerolstein?" she added, with a bitter smile.

"Left alone with the Prince!" she muttered in an exhausted

voice, while all expression was fading from her features. "My strength is wasting away! I feel that I am dying! I shall not see her!"

"Yes, yes! Take courage, Sarah; that boon will not be denied to you."

"I have lost all hope—all self-control. I required supernatural strength. My sight is already dim!"

"Sarah!" said the Prince, approaching the Countess, and taking her hand; "she is coming now; she will soon be here."

"God will not grant me this final consolation!"

"Listen, Sarah! I hear a carriage. Yes; your daughter is here!"

The noise of a carriage was heard on the pavement of the yard.

The Countess did not perceive it; her words became more and more incoherent. Rodolphe, leaning toward her with anxiety, saw a film falling upon her eyes.

"Pardon! my daughter—to see her—pardon—at least—after my death—the honors of my rank:" she finally murmured. Such were the last intelligible words of Sarah—the fixed and governing idea of her life, was her last thought in death, notwithstanding her sincere repentance.

Murph suddenly entered: "My lord, the Princess Marie."

"No! let her not come in!" exclaimed Rodolphe quickly. "Let Seyton attend with the minister;" and then, pointing to Sarah, who was in the agonies of dissolution, "God, has refused to her the consolation of embracing her child."

Within half an hour, the Countess Sarah McGregor had ceased to exist.

CHAPTER XVI. ..... BICÊTRE.

A FORTNIGHT had now elapsed since Rodolphe, by marrying Sarah, had legitimated the birth of Fleur de Marie. It was the day of Mid-Lent, and we will now conduct the reader to Bicêtre, an immense establishment, as every one knows, designed as a retreat for the insane; and serving, also, as an asylum for seven or eight hundred poor old men, who are admitted to that house of civil invalids when they have reached the age of seventy, or have been struck with serious infirmities. Upon arriving at Bicêtre, you enter a large yard, planted with trees, and ornamented, here and there, with beds of flowers. Nothing is more agreeable and salubrious than the grounds destined as a place of recreation for the aged invalids to whom we have alluded. The yard surrounds the building; which, upon the second floor, contains spacious dormitories, well ventilated, and furnished with comfortable beds. On the first floor, there are dining-rooms, unexceptionably neat, where the inmates of Bicêtre partake, in common, of a healthy, abundant, and agreeable diet, prepared with the greatest care, owing to the parental solicitude of the directors of that excellent establishment. Such an asylum would realize the dream of the widower or bachelor artisan, who, after a long life of patient industry, and resigned privations, would find there the repose which he has never enjoyed before. Unfortunately, that favoritism which extends to every institution of public charity, has taken possession of the administration of Bicêtre; and the majority of those who enjoy this benefaction, are servants, who are indebted, for their asylum, to the influence of their former masters. To us, this seems a great abuse of a public charity. Nothing is more meritorious than long and honest domestic services: no one is more worthy of recompense than those menials who have been tested by long years of devotion, and who were formerly regarded as a part of the family. But, however praiseworthy such services may be, it belongs to the master who has profited by them, and not to the state, to provide a suitable remuneration. Would it not, then, be just, moral, and humane, that the admittance to Bicêtre and other similar establishments, should belong to those artisans who could present proof of the most upright conduct, and the greatest misfortune? However limited the number of those unfortunates may be, these retreats would be a distant hope, which would alleviate their fatigue and daily misery—a salutary hope, which would encourage them in the path of virtue, by holding up before them the prospect of future comfort, certain, although far removed; and also afford them some tranquillity, some recompense. As they could not gain admittance into such an asylum, if their conduct were not irreproachable, good morals would become almost obligatory upon them. Is it, then, too much to demand, that laborers, who reach such an advanced age, through privations of every kind, should, at least, have the chance of securing, at Bicêtre, bread, repose, and shelter for their exhausted old age? Such a measure might henceforth exclude from that establishment, the literary, the learned, and the artist, who have, in declining years, no other refuge. It is a melancholy fact that, in our own day, men of science and intelligence, who have been celebrated for their talents, secure, with great difficulty, a place among those old servants whom the influence of their masters provides with a resting-place in Bicêtre. In the name of those who have contributed to the renown and happiness of France—of those whose reputation has been established by popular approbation, may we not invoke an honorable retreat for their declining years? Is it too much to ask? Let us, however, cite one instance out of a thousand. Eight or ten millions have been spent to rear the Madeleine, which is neither a temple nor a church. With that enormous sum, how much good might have been accomplished! A retreat might have been established, where two hundred and fifty, or three hundred persons, once distinguished as men of learning, poets, or musicians, civil officers, physicians, lawyers, &c. &c.—for almost all these professions have their representatives in Bicêtre—might have been provided with the comforts and necessaries of life. This would have been a project worthy of philanthropy and national dignity, in a country which professes to take the lead in intelligence, the arts, and civilization. But such a scheme did not enter into the imagination of men. Hegesippe Moreau, and many other rare sons of genius, died in the hospitals, or from want. Men of elevated intelligence, from whose lips formerly fell sparkles of wit and poetry, now wear, at Bicêtre, the livery of the poor: for there is not in this city, as in London, a hospital, where strangers, without resources, can find, at least for one night, a shelter, a bed, and a morsel of food. The laborers who resort to the quays in search of work, have not even a roof to protect them from the inclemency of the season, while waiting for employment; not even a shed, which, in the market-place, protects the cattle exposed to sale; and yet the quays are a sort of exchange for laborers without work; and, in that exchange, nothing but honest transactions are conducted. The object of the assemblage is to obtain hard work, and wages insufficient to provide the artisan with bitter bread. But there would be no end to the suggestions, if we wished to name all the charitable establishments which have been sacrificed to that grotesque design of a Grecian temple, destined, finally, to Catholic worship.

We must, however, return to Bicêtre, and enumerate the different purposes which that establishment served.

At the time of this narrative, those condemned to death were conducted there after their sentence. It was then, in one of the cells of this house, that the widow Martial and her daughter, were awaiting the moment of their execution, which was to take place to-morrow. Neither the mother nor the daughter, deigned to supplicate a pardon, or to request an appeal.

Nicholas, Squelette, and several other wretches, succeeded in escaping from La Force, the day before they were to be transferred to Bicêtre.

As we have already said, nothing was more pleasant than the approach to this prison from Paris, where the yard was entered, designed for the poor. The elms and linden-trees were already covered with the green buds of an early spring. The grass was extremely verdant, and the beds were covered with the first flowers of the season, crocuses, primroses, and the bright and variegated auriculas. The sun gilded the sand of the pathways; the old pensioners, clothed in their gray uniform, were promenading up and down the alleys, or conversing with each other, seated on the benches—their countenances were tranquil, quiet, or indifferent. Eleven o'clock had just struck, when two carriages drew up before the exterior gate. Madam George, Germain and Rigolette, alighted from the first; Louise Morel and her mother, from the second.

Germain and Rigolette had been a fortnight married. We leave the reader to imagine the petulant gayety, the noisy happiness, which sparkled in the actions of the grisette, who only opened her lips to laugh, smile, or kiss Madam George, whom she called her mother.

The features of Germain expressed a more calm and subdued felicity, in which an expression of gratitude and respect was mingled, for the excellent and courageous girl, who, while he was in prison, had lavished upon him such kind and agreeable consolation. Of all this, however, Rigolette was perfectly oblivious; and as soon as Germain began to converse upon the subject, she immediately suggested some other topic, pretending that those recollections made her melancholy. Although she was now Madam Germain, with a dowry of forty thousand francs, the munificent gift of the Prince, Rigolette was unwilling to exchange the cap of the grisette for the bonnet of the matron; and her husband approved of her choice. Never was humility a better auxiliary of innocent coquetry; for nothing was more graceful and charming than her small cap, with a flat border, somewhat in the peasant's fashion, and trimmed on each side with two large orange-colored bows, which suited so well the jet-black of her hair, that now fell down in curls. A collar, beautifully embroidered, encircled the lovely neck of the young bride. A scarf of French cashmere, of the same color with the ribbons

on her cap, concealed partly her trim and chiselled waist; and although she had abjured corsets, though she had now time to lace herself; there was no wrinkle in her dress of taffeta, close to her slender form, like that of the marble Galatea.

Madam George's countenance beamed with happiness, as she gazed upon her children.

Louise Morel, after a vigilant inquiry into the merits of the case, had been released by the Chamber of accusation. The fine face of the daughter of the lapidary, marked by the lines of grief, announced sad and patient resignation. Thanks to the generosity of Rodolphe, and to the cares lavished upon her, the mother of Louise had recovered her health.

The keeper of the exterior door, respectfully asked Madam George, the object of her visit.

She replied, "That she, as well as the persons who accompanied her, had made an appointment with one of the physicians of the insane at half-past eleven."

Madam George was requested to wait for the physician, either in an office which was pointed out to her, or in the large yard which we have already described. She passed into the yard, leaning upon the arm of her son; and, continuing her conversation with the wife of the lapidary, walked in the alleys of the garden. Louise and Rigolette followed a short distance behind them.

"How happy I am to meet you again, dear Louise!" said the grisette. "When we went to search for you in rue du Temple this morning, after coming from Bonqueval, I wished to go up to your room; but my husband would not permit me, saying that it was too high, and I was obliged to wait for you in the carriage. Your vehicle followed ours, and I now see you for the first time since——"

"Since you came to console me in prison. Ah! Mademoiselle Rigolette," exclaimed Louise, with emotion, "what——"

"In the first place," said the grisette gayly, interrupting the daughter of the lapidary in order to escape her thanks, "I am no longer Mademoiselle Rigolette, but Madam Germain. I know not whether you are acquainted with the fact; but I insist upon my titles."

"Yes, I knew that you were married; but allow me to thank you for——"

'But what you do not know, my good Louise," said Madam Germain, interrupting again the daughter of Morel, in order to change the current of her thoughts—"what you do not know is, that I was married, thanks to the generosity of him who has been a minister of Providence to us all—to you and your friends, to me, to Germain and his mother."

"Mr. Rodolphe? we daily bless his name! When I left the prison, the lawyer whom he sent to advise and encourage me, told me that, thanks to Mr. Rodolphe, who had already done so much for us, Mr. Ferrand"—and the poor girl could not speak the name without a shudder—"that Mr. Ferrand, to redeem his injuries, had settled an annuity upon me and my poor father, who is still here, but who is daily recovering."

"And who will return with you to-day to Paris, if the opinion of that worthy physician is well-founded."

"May it please Heaven!"

"It *will* please Heaven—your father is so good and so honest; and I am sure that he will be able to return with us. The physician thinks that the unforeseen presence of those persons whom your father daily saw before losing his reason, may completely restore it. In my humble judgment, it appears certain."

"I dare not yet believe it, Mademoiselle."

"Madam Germain; if it is the same to you, my good Louise. But to return to what I was saying: do you know who Mr. Rodolphe actually is?"

"He is a Providence to the poor!"

"Certainly; but do you not know what he is besides? Well, I will tell you;" and addressing her husband, who was walking before her with Madam George upon his arm, and conversing with the wife of the lapidary, Rigolette exclaimed, "Don't walk so fast, my dear; you will fatigue our good mother. Besides, I wish to have you nearer to me."

Germain turned his head, moderated his pace, and smiled on Rigolette, who stealthily sent him a kiss.

"What an excellent little fellow my Germain is! don't you think so, Louise? And with all that, he has such a *distingué* air, such a genteel form! Was I not right in preferring him to my other neighbors, Mr. Girandeau and Mr. Cabrion? By the way, speaking of Cabrion, how is Mr. Pipelet and his wife? the physician said they must come here also, for your father has often pronounced their names."

"They will soon be here; for when I left the house, they had already started."

"They will not fail to arrive; Mr. Pipelet is as punctual as a clock,"

Rigolette continued: "But let us return to my marriage, and to Mr. Rodolphe. Only imagine, Louise, it was he who sent me with the order to Germain, that opened his prison doors to him. You will conceive our joy, on coming out of that hateful jail! We got to my lodgings, and there, assisted by Germain, I prepared a little dinner; such an elegant little dinner! It is true, that it was not to much purpose; for, after it was cooked, we could neither of us eat a bit—we were too happy for that. At eleven o'clock Germain went away; but we appointed to meet next morning. At five o'clock I was up, and at work; for I was at least two days behindhand. At eight o'clock, some one knocked at my door. I opened it. Who do you suppose came in? Mr. Rodolphe. At first, I began thanking him—and from the bottom of my heart—for what he had done for Germain; he would not allow me to go on. 'My voisine,' said he to me, 'Germain will soon be here. You will deliver this letter to him. You and he will take a hackney-coach; you will go directly to a small village called Bonqueval, near Ecouen, on the Saint Denis road. When you arrive there, you will ask for Madam George.' 'With much pleasure, Mr. Rodolphe; though I must tell you, I shall lose another day; and, without meaning to complain, that will make three days I have lost!' 'Do not make yourself uneasy, my voisine; you will have plenty of work at Madam George's. You will find that I have given you an excellent customer in her.' 'Oh! that's quite another thing, Mr. Rodolphe! I shall be very glad of it!' 'Well, good-day, voisine!' 'Good day, and many thanks, my voisin!' He went away, and Germain soon came in. I told him what had passed. Mr. Rodolphe was incapable of deceiving us. We got into a coach as merry as larks. We, who had been so sorrowful the morning before—only think, what a change! We arrived at the place he had told us to come to. Ah! my dear Louise! who would have imagined it? In spite of myself, the tears will come into my eyes. This Madam George, who is now before us, is the mother of Germain!"

"His mother?"

"Yes—assuredly—his mother; from whom he had been carried off when quite a child; and whom she never expected to see again. You can imagine what delight they both felt. When Madam George had kissed her son, again and again, weeping all the time with joy, then came my turn. Mr. Rodolphe had, undoubtedly, written many good things about me; for she told me, folding her arms around me, that she had heard of my conduct toward her son. 'And if you will permit it, my dear mother,' said Germain, 'Rigolette will be your daughter, too!' 'If I will permit it! my children—and with all my heart, too. I am quite sure that you can never find a better, or a prettier little wife.' Here we are, then, regularly settled, on an excellent farm, with Germain, his mother, and my little birds, which I had sent for, that they might also be of the party—poor little things. Although I do not like the country, the days passed so quietly, that it was like a dream. I worked only for my own amusement. I assisted Madam George—I walked about with Germain; I sang; I jumped—oh! I was almost crazy with happiness. And, finally, our wedding-day was fixed, and we were to be married a fortnight ago. Two days before that, a handsome carriage drove up to the door, and a fine, tall, stout, bald-headed gentleman, with a most pleasing countenance, got out of it, who brought me, from Mr. Rodolphe, a wedding present. Figure to yourself a beautiful, large rosewood coffer, on the lid of which, inlaid upon blue porcelain, were these words, in letters of gold: *Labor and prudence, honor and happiness.* I opened the box; what did I find there? Some small lace caps, such as I am now wearing; several pieces for gowns; some jewelry; gloves; this scarf; a beautiful shawl—in fine, it was just like a fairy tale."

"'Tis true, it is for all the world like a fairy tale; but see what happiness it has brought you, to be so good and so industrious!"

"As to being good and industrious, my dear Louise, that is no merit of mine. I am as God made me—so much the happier for me! But this was not all: at the bottom of the coffer I found a pretty pocket-book, on which was inscribed, '*The voisin to his voisine.*' I opened it. There were two envelops in it—the one for Germain, the other for myself. In the one for Germain he found a paper, by which he was appointed director of a bank for the poor, with a salary of four thousand francs; in the envelop addressed to me, I found a certificate for sixty thousand francs upon the royal treasury. Yes, that's the truth. This was my marriage portion. I wished not to accept it, but Madam George, who had been talking with the tall, bald-headed gentleman, and with Germain, said to me: 'My child, you can, you ought to accept this gift, it is the reward of your prudence, of your industry, and of your devotion to those less unfortunate; for it was by depriving yourself of many hours of rest, at the risk of endangering your health, and of thus losing your

only means of existence, that you could devote a portion of your time to visiting your friends who were in affliction, and console them.'"

"Oh! that's quite true!" exclaimed Louise; "there is not another who can equal you for that, at least, Madam Germain."

"Well, I told the tall, bald-headed gentleman, that what I had done was for my own satisfaction. He replied, 'That's no matter. Mr. Rodolphe is immensely rich. Your marriage portion is merely, on his part, a pledge of his esteem and friendship. Your refusal would only give him pain; and, besides which, he will be present at your wedding, and then he would certainly oblige you to accept it.'"

"How fortunate, that so much wealth should have fallen to the lot of so charitable a person as Mr. Rodolphe," said Louise.

"No doubt he is very rich; but if he were only that; ah! my good Louise, if you only knew what Mr. Rodolphe is! and I, made him carry my parcels! But patience, and I will tell you more. The evening before my marriage, and very late, the tall bald-headed gentleman arrived again with post-horses. Mr. Rodolphe could not come; he had been taken ill; but the tall gentleman came instead of him. It was only at that moment, my good Louise, that we learned that your benefactor and ours was—guess what! A prince!"

"A prince?"

"What do I say? A prince—a royal highness—a reigning grand-duke—a little king! Germain explained that to me."

"Mr. Rodolphe——"

"Ah! Louise; and I, who had asked him to help me wax my floor!"

"A prince! almost a king! That is the reason why he has so much power to do good."

"You will understand the confusion I was in. And so, when I found that he was almost a king, I did not dare refuse the marriage portion. We were married. About a week ago, Mr. Rodolphe sent to tell us—we two Germains and Madame George—that he would be glad if we would pay him a wedding visit. We went to Paris; you will judge how my heart beat; we arrived at the rue Plumêt; we entered a large palace; we passed through several halls, filled with servants all covered with gold lace—gentlemen in black, with silver chains about their necks, and long swords at their sides—officers in uniform, and I know not what; and then so much gilding! so much gilding all around, that it quite dazzled me. At last we found the bald-headed gentleman, in a room with other persons, all bedizened with embroidery. He introduced us into a large saloon, where we found Mr. Rodolphe—that is to say, the Prince—dressed very plainly, and with so good, so frank, so affable an air—in fine, so much *the air of Rodolphe of old times*, that I immediately felt perfectly at my ease; particularly when I recollected his putting on my shawl, mending my pens, and giving me his arm in the street."

"You did not feel afraid? Oh! how I should have trembled."

"Well, I did not. After having received Madam George with unequalled kindness, and giving his hand to Germain, the Prince said to me, smiling, 'Well, my voisine, how are father Crêtu and Ramouette?'—these are the names of my birds; was it not amiable in him to remember them? 'I am quite sure,' added he, 'that you and Germain try whether you can't sing as merrily as your birds.' 'Yes, my lord'—Madame George had been giving us a lesson all the way, telling us we must call the Prince my lord—'yes, my lord, our happiness is great, and it seems greater and sweeter still to us, because 'tis to you we owe it.' 'T is not to me that you are indebted for it, my child, but to your own and Germain's excellent qualities,' et cetera, et cetera. I pass over the remainder of his compliments. At last we left this great Prince with heavy hearts, for we shall never see him more. He told us he intended returning to Germany in a few days; perhaps he is already gone; but, gone or not, his remembrance will always remain with us."

"As he has subjects, they must be very happy!"

"It must be so—he has done so much good to us, who are nothing to him. I forgot to tell you, that it was on this farm that one of my former companions in the prison had some time resided—a very good and worthy little girl, who, by good fortune, had also met with Mr. Rodolphe; but Madam George had particularly desired me not to speak to the Prince about her. I do n't know why."

"Doubtless, because he does not like that any one should speak to him of the good he has done."

"That which appears certain, is, that the dear Goualeuse has found her relations, who have taken her with them, far, far off. All that I regret is, not to have embraced her before she went away."

"Come! come! so much the better," said Louise, bitterly; "she is happy, too."

"Pardon! my good Louise; I am too selfish, that is true. I only speak to you of happiness—and you have so much cause to be still unhappy!"

"If my child had but lived," said Louise, mournfully, "that would have consoled me; for what worthy man would have me now, although I have some property?"

"I say, on the contrary, Louise, that 't is only a worthy man who would be capable of comprehending your position. When he shall know all—when he shall know you—he could only pity and esteem you; and he would be assured of finding in you a good and worthy wife."

"You say this to console me."

"No! I say it because it is the truth."

"Well! whether true or not, it does me good to hear it, and I thank you for it;—but, who is coming here? Only look! 't is Mr. Pipelet and his wife! Dear me! how revived he looks! he who lately was so unhappy on account of the tricks played on him by Mr. Cabrion!"

And so, in fact, it was. Mr. and Madam Pipelet were advancing, gayly—Alfred, still wearing his immovable, drum-like hat, dressed in a magnificent pea-green coat, in its first lustre; his cravat, embroidered at the corners, gave place to his formidable shirt-collar, which covered half his cheeks; a large waistcoat, the ground of which was yellow, with chestnut-colored stripes—a pair of black pantaloons, rather short—stockings of dazzling whiteness—and shoes, fresh varnished—completed his equipment.

Anastasia was sailing pompously along, in an ample gown of amaranth merino, which contrasted boldly with a sky-blue shawl. She was proudly exposing to the public gaze her freshly-curled wig, and carried her cap, hanging by its green ribbons on her arm, as a reticule.

The physiognomy of Alfred—usually so grave, so reflective, and, latterly, so care-worn—was absolutely beaming with joy and happiness. Immediately on his perceiving Louise and Rigolette, though still at a distance from them, he set out running, and cried out, with all the force of his bass voice, "Delivered! gone!"

"Bear me! Mr. Pipelet," said Rigolette, "how joyous you appear! What can have happened to you?"

"He is gone! Mademoiselle; or, rather, *Madam*—may I, can I, ought I to say?—for now you 're precisely in the position of Anastasia, thanks to the *conjugo*—as your husband, Mr. Germain, is precisely in the same position as myself."

"You are very polite, Mr. Pipelet," said Rigolette, smiling; "but, tell me, who is gone?"

"Cabrion!" cried Mr. Pipelet, inhaling and exhaling the air with indescribable satisfaction, as though relieved from an enormous weight. "He leaves France never to return—for ever—in perpetuity—in fine, he is gone."

"Are you quite sure of that?"

"I saw him yesterday, with my own eyes, ascend into a diligence, going on the Strasburgh road; he and all his baggage—his portable effects, that is to say, a hat-case, his painting-stick, and a box of colors."

"What is the old dear saying to you, there?" said Anastasia, arriving out of breath, having with difficulty followed the precipitate steps of Alfred; "I would lay a wager he was telling you of Cabrion's departure; he did nothing all the way but talk of it."

"I tell you, Anastasia, that I no longer walk upon the earth; I seem to float in air. Before this happened, it seemed to me that my hat was lined with lead, and now it would appear the air raises me toward the firmament! Gone at last!—gone!—and he will never come back!"

"Happily he's gone; the scoundrel!"

"Anastasia! be merciful to the absent—happiness makes me charitable! I will only say that he was an infamous blackguard!"

"And how did you know that he was going to Germany?" asked Rigolette.

"By a friend of my king of tenants. But speaking of that dear man—thanks to the good character he gave us—Alfred is appointed porter and keeper of a loan office and charitable bank, founded in our house by a good soul, to whom it appears to me Mr. Rodolphe was the travelling clerk to do good actions."

"This happens fortunately," rejoined Rigolette, "for my husband is the director of that bank, also through the good offices of Mr. Rodolphe."

"Well! only think!" gayly cried Madam Pipelet. "So much the better!—so much the better!—old faces are more agreeable than new ones. But let us return to Cabrion. Imagine, then, that a tall, stout, bald-headed gentlemen, when he came to apprise us of the appointment of Alfred as keeper, asked us whether a

painter of considerable talent, named Cabrion, had not lodged in our house. At the name of Cabrion, my poor old dear there, raises his boot in the air, and almost faints away. Fortunately the stout bald-head adds—'This young painter is about to set out for Germany—a rich person takes him there to execute some work which will detain him several years, and perhaps he may establish himself altogether in that foreign country.' In testimony of which, this gentleman gave my old dear the address of the diligence office from which Cabrion was to start, and the date of his departure."

"And I had the unhoped-for happiness to read in the register of the diligence office—'Mr. Cabrion, painter, departs for Strasburgh and foreign countries.' The departure was fixed for this morning; I therefore repaired to the court-yard with my wife——"

"We saw the scoundrel mount on the coach roof, alongside the conductor."

"And, finally, at the moment when the diligence was moving off, Cabrion perceived me, recognized me, turned round and cried out, 'I am off for ever!—yours, while life lasts!' Fortunately, the conductor's horn almost drowned these last words, and his indecent familiarity, which I despise. But, at last, thanks be to God! he is gone!"

"And gone for ever, be assured," said Rigolette, with difficulty restraining her violent inclination to laugh; "but what you do not know, and what will very much astonish you, is, that Mr. Rodolphe was——"

"Was what!"

"A disguised prince! a royal highness!"

"Oh! bah! what a farce this is!" said Anastasia.

"I swear it, by my husband," said Rigolette, very seriously.

"My king of tenants a Royal Highness!" exclaimed Anastasia; "and I asked him to take care of my lodge! Pardon! pardon! pardon!" and, saying this, she mechanically put on her cap, as if that head-dress were more suitable, when speaking of a prince.

By a manifestation directly opposed to this, in point of form, but precisely similar as to motive, Alfred, contrary to his usual custom, hastily took off his hat, and, profoundly bowing to the vacant air, cried, "A Prince! a Royal Highness in our lodge! and he saw me stretched between my sheets, when I took to my bed, in consequence of the indignities showered upon me, by this Cabrion!"

At this moment, Madam George turned round, and said to her son and Rigolette, "My children, here is the doctor."

CHAPTER XVII..... THE SCHOOLMASTER.

Dr. Herbin was a man of middle age, with a very intelligent and noble countenance; his look was penetrating, and gave evidence of great sagacity; and his smile was peculiarly winning. His naturally harmonious voice became almost affectionate, when addressing insane patients; and, therefore, the suavity of his accent, the gentleness of his words, often appeared to calm the natural irritability of these afflicted beings. He was among the first of those who had the care of insane persons, to substitute commiseration and kindness, to the dreadfully coercive measures which were formerly employed. He abolished chains, and blows, and cold immersions, and, above all, solitary confinement, excepting in some peculiar cases.

His superior intelligence had clearly seen, that monomania, insanity, and furious madness, could only be increased by brutal treatment, and by isolation; and that, on the contrary, by making insane persons mix, as it were, in common life, they would find numberless incidents, which would divert their attention, and prevent them from being absorbed by one fixed idea, which becomes the more fatal, as it becomes more concentrated by solitude and intimidation.

There is no doubt that, in a few years hence, the present penitentiary system, with its prisons, where all classes are pent up together—and which, in fact, are so many schools for infamy—with its frightful galleys, its chains, its pillories and its scaffolds, will appear to us as vicious, barbarous and atrocious, as our former mode of treating insane persons now seems to us cruel and absurd.

"Sir," said Madam George, addressing Dr. Herbin, "I thought I might be permitted to accompany my son and my daughter-in-law, although I am not acquainted with Mr. Morel: the position of this excellent man appeared so interesting to me, that I could not resist my desire of being present with my children, to witness his complete return to reason. I understood, sir, that you anticipated this would be the result of the trial which you are about to submit him to?"

"I think much, madam, may be effected by the presence of his daughter, and of persons he was in the habit of seeing."

"When they came to arrest my husband," said Madam Morel, pointing out Rigolette to the doctor, "our good little neighbor, here, was occupied in affording assistance to me and to my children."

"My father was also well acquainted with Mr. Germain, who has always shown great kindness toward us," added Louise; and then presenting Alfred and Anastasia—"Mr. and Madam Pipelet are the door-keepers of our house—they also assisted our family, during its misfortunes, as much as they were able."

"I thank you, sir," said the doctor, to Alfred, "for having taken the trouble to come so far; but, after what I have heard, I feel assured you will not consider this visit inconvenient to you."

"Sir," said Mr. Pipelet, bowing very solemnly, "men should assist each other in this world—we are brethren. Without considering that Mr. Morel was, as I may say, the cream of honest men before he lost his reason, in consequence of his arrest, and that of this dear Mademoiselle Louise."

"And," rejoined Anastasia, "I still regret that the soup I threw over the backs of those vile bailiffs was not boiling lead—"

"'Tis true: I must render this just homage to the affection which my wife has always borne to the Morel family!"

"If you do not fear," said Dr. Herbin to Madam George, "the sight of deranged persons, we will pass through several of the yards, on our way to the exterior building, where I have thought it best to have Morel conducted; for I gave orders, this morning, that he should not be taken to the farm, as usual."

"To the farm, sir! Is there a farm here?"

"I conceive, madam, that this must surprise you. Yes, we have a farm here, the produce of which is a great resource to the house, and which is cultivated by insane people."*

"Are they at liberty when they work there?"

"Undoubtedly; and their labor, the serenity of the fields, the sight of nature, is one of our best modes of cure. One keeper, only, conducts them there; and there has been hardly one single instance of attempt at escape; they go there with perfect satisfaction, and the small wages they earn serves to meliorate their condition, and procures them little luxuries. But we have now arrived at the gate of one of the yards." And then, perceiving a slight look of apprehension on the features of Madam George, the doctor added—"do not be alarmed, madam; in a few minutes, you will feel quite as calm as I do."

"I will follow you, sir—come, my children."

"Anastasia," whispered Mr. Pipelet, who had remained with her, some little distance behind the others, "when I think that if the demoniacal persecutions of Cabrion had continued, your Alfred would have gone mad, and, as such, might have been confined among these unfortunate wretches whom we are about to contemplate, in the most grotesque costumes, chains fastened to their waists, or shut up in iron cages, like the ferocious animals at the 'Jardin des Plantes'——"

"Don't say a word about it to me, my old dear: they say that men who have become mad from love, are like real monkeys: the moment that they see a woman, they rush to the bars of their cage, uttering the most frightful coolings, and their keepers are obliged to cool them by flogging them with heavy whips, and letting flow upon their heads streams of iced water, which fall from a height of at least a hundred feet; and even that is not enough to cool them down."

"Anastasia," said Alfred, very gravely, "do not go too near the cages of these mad people—an accident soon happens."

"It would not be generous in me, either, to appear to irritate them; for after all," added Anastasia, in a melancholy tone, "our charms are the cause which has brought them to this. But hark you, Alfred, I tremble when I think that had I refused you the happiness of becoming mine, you might, at this very moment, have been as mad from love as any of these infuriated beings; and that you, poor dear, might have clung to the gratings of your cage, and have roared out after every woman—you, who, on the contrary, always run away the moment they begin to tease you."

"My pudicity, 'tis true, is soon alarmed; but I have never felt any ill consequences arising from it. But, Anastasia, the gate is opening—I tremble—we are about too see abominable faces; to hear the clankings of heavy chains; and the gnashing of many teeth!"

Mr. and Madam Pipelet, not having, as will be understood, heard the conversation of Doctor Herbin, were imbued with the popular prejudices which still exist, with regard to lunatic asylums—prejudices which, moreover, only forty years ago, were frightful realities.

The gate of the yard was open. This yard, forming a long parallelogram, was planted with trees, and furnished with many

* This farm—an admirable curative institution—is at a very short distance from Bicêtre.

benches. On each side, ran a gallery of elegant construction; well ventilated cells opened on to this gallery. About fifty men, all dressed in gray cloth, were either walking about, talking to each other, or were sitting, silent and contemplative, in the sunshine.

Nothing could differ more from the idea which is generally entertained of the eccentricities of costume, and the peculiarities of countenance attributed to the insane, than the appearance of those who occupied this yard. A long habit of observation, was even necessary to discover upon many of these faces, positive indications of madness.

On the arrival of Doctor Herbin, a number of them pressed round him, with joyful eagerness, holding out their hands to him, with a touching expression of confidence and gratitude; to which he replied, by cordially greeting them with "Good morning, my children!" Some of these unfortunate people, who were too far from the doctor to shake hands with him, came and held out their hands with a sort of timid hesitation to the persons who accompanied him.

"Good morning, my friends," said Germain to them, pressing their hands with a kindness, which appeared to delight them.

"Pray, sir," said Madam George to the doctor, "are these mad people?"

"They are all the most dangerous ones in the house," replied the doctor, smiling. "We leave them together during the day; and during the night only, they are shut up in those cells, of which you see the doors open."

"How! these people are completely mad! but, when then are they furiously so?"

"When their malady first attacks them, and they are brought here, and then, little by little, the system acts upon them; the sight of their companions has a calming effect upon them, and diverts their attention. Mild treatment appeases them; and their violent attacks, which, at first, often occur, become less frequent. Look, here comes one of the most violent among them."

This was a robust and well-made man, of about forty years of age, with long black hair, high forehead, bilious complexion, a penetrating look, and with a countenance full of intelligence. He approached the doctor, and said to him with a tone of exquisite politeness, although evidently restraining the violence of his feelings: "Doctor, I ought, in my turn, to have the privilege of conversing with, and leading the blind man about. I shall have the honor of observing to you, that it would be a flagrant injustice, to deprive this unfortunate man of my conversation; or to deliver him up"—and here the madman smiled with disdainful bitterness—"to the stupid wanderings of an idiot, who is altogether incapable—I do not think that I am venturing too far in saying this—who is altogether incapable of forming the slightest notions upon any science whatsoever—when my conversation would instruct and amuse the blind man. Thus," added he, with extreme volubility, "I should have given him my opinion upon isothermal and orthogonal superfices; making him observe, that equations, with partial differences, the geometrical interpretation of which is resumed in two orthogonal superfices, cannot be generally formed into an integral, on account of their complication. I would have proved to him that conjugated superfices are necessarily all isothermal, and we would have endeavored to discover what superfices are capable of forming a system truly isothermal. If I do not delude myself, sir, compare this species of recreation to the stupidities with which the blind man is assailed," added the madman, pausing a little to take breath, "and then tell me, whether it is not worse than murder, to deprive him of my conversation?"

"Do not consider what he has just said, madam, for they are the lucubrations of a madman," said the doctor, whispering. "He, now and then, in this manner discusses the most difficult questions in geometry and astronomy, and with a sagacity which would do honor to the most illustrious professors in those sciences. His knowledge is immense. He speaks every living language; but he is, alas! a martyr to his vanity, and to his thirst for learning; he imagines, that he has absorbed in his own mind, all human knowledge; and that, by keeping him here, humanity is again plunged into an abyss of the most profound ignorance."

The doctor then replied aloud to the madman, who appeared to be awaiting his answer with respectful anxiety: "My dear Mr. Charles, your application appears to me founded in justice; and this poor blind man, who, I believe, is also dumb, but happily is not deaf, will find infinite charms in the conversation of a man so erudite as you are. I will take care that justice shall be done you."

"Besides this, you still insist on keeping me here, and on depriving the universe of all human knowledge, which I have concentrated in myself," said the madman, becoming more and more animated, and beginning to gesticulate, in an agitated manner.

"Come, come, be calm, my good Mr. Charles; fortunately the universe has not yet perceived the great loss it has suffered; as soon as it shall claim you, we will hasten to comply with its demand. In every state of things, a man of your capacity, of your knowledge, can always do great good."

"But I am with regard to science, what the ark of Noah was to physical nature!" exclaimed he, grinding his teeth, and looking wildly.

"I know that, my dear friend."

"You wish to hide the light under the bushel," cried he, clenching his fists; "but then I would shiver you like glass!" added he, with a menacing gesture, his face purple with passion, and his veins swelled almost to bursting.

"Ah! Mr. Charles," replied the doctor, fixing upon him a look at once calm and penetrating, and giving to his voice a flattering and affectionate tone, "I thought you the greatest philosopher of modern times——"

"And of the past, too!" cried the madman, forgetting, all at once, his anger for his vanity.

"You will not let me finish what I was about to say—that you are the greatest philosopher of times past, times present——"

"And times to come!" added the madman, proudly.

"Oh! the terrible chatterer! who will persist in interrupting me," said the doctor, smiling, and patting him, in a friendly manner, on the shoulder; "would not one suppose, that I am ignorant of the admiration you inspire, and which you fully merit? Come, then, let us go to the blind man; conduct me to him."

"You are an excellent man, doctor. Come, then, and you shall hear the fooleries they make him listen to, when I could say such magnificent things to him," rejoined the madman, now perfectly tranquillized, and walking before the doctor, with a satisfied air.

"I must acknowledge to you, sir," said Germain, who had gone close to his wife, on perceiving that she became alarmed, when the madman was speaking and gesticulating so violently, "at one moment I was fearful that a crisis was approaching."

"Bless you, sir, in former times, at the first show of excitement, the first menacing gesture, of this unfortunate man, the keepers would have thrown themselves upon him; would have bound his arms, would have beaten him, would have let water fall upon him from a great height—one of the most atrocious tortures human ingenuity can devise. Judge of the effects of such treatment upon such an energetic and irritable organization, whose expansive power becomes the greater, the more it is compressed. After that, he would have fallen into one of those frightful fits of fury, which defy the most powerful restraint, exasperate themselves by their frequency, and become, at length, almost incurable; whereas, as you have seen, by not at once confining this momentary effervescence, or by diverting it, with the assistance of that excessive mobility of mind, which is remarked in almost all insane persons, these ephemeral ebullitions are cooled down as quickly as they rise."

"And who is this blind man that he has mentioned? is that a delusion arising from his madness?" asked Madam George.

"No madam; 'tis a very singular history," replied the doctor. "This blind man was found in a low haunt, in the Champs Elysées, where a band of robbers and assassins were arrested. This man was found chained, in the centre of a subterraneous cavern; at his side was the corpse of a woman, so dreadfully mutilated, that she could not be recognized."

"How dreadful!" said Madam George, shuddering.*

"This man is frightfully ugly; all his face has been burnt by vitriol. Since his arrival here, he has not pronounced a single word. I do not know whether he is really dumb, or only affects to be so. By a singular chance, the only furious attacks he has had, have occurred during my absence, and always at night. Unfortunately, we can obtain no reply to any question that we put to him, and we cannot, therefore, obtain any information as to his state of mind. His attacks are occasioned by some cause, which is to us altogether impenetrable. The other patients pay him much attention; they direct his steps, and they take pleasure in talking to him, also! accord me to the degree of intelligence they possess. See! here he is!"

All the persons who accompanied the doctor, drew back with horror at the appearance of the Schoolmaster—for it was he!

He was not mad; but he feigned to be both dumb and insane. He had massacred Chouette, not in a fit of madness, but in a delirium brought on by fever, similar to that he had already suf-

* Rodolphe had always kept Madam George ignorant of the fate of her husband, the Schoolmaster, after the latter had escaped from the galleys of Rochefort.

fered during his dreadful vision at the farm of Bouqueval. After his arrest at the tavern in the Champs Elysées, having recovered from his temporary delirium, he found himself shut up in one of the cells of the Conciergerie, in which they provisionally confined insane persons. Hearing it said around him, "He is a madman, a furious madman," he determined upon continuing to act the part of one; and decided on appearing altogether dumb, that he might not betray himself by answering any questions that might be put to him, in the event of his pretended madness being doubted. This stratagem succeeded. Being conducted to Bicêtre, he pretended from time to time to have violent fits of madness, always taking care to choose the night-time for these exhibitions, in order to escape the penetrating observation of the chief physician. The surgeon in waiting, being awoke and called up in haste, hardly ever arrived before the fit was over. The few accomplices of the Schoolmaster, who knew his real name, and his escape from the galleys of Rochefort, were ignorant what had become of him; and besides which, they had no interest in giving information against him. His identity could not, therefore, be proved. By continuing to play the dumb madman, he hoped to be able to remain perpetually at Bicêtre—yes, to the end of his life: this was the only wish, the sole desire of this man, thanks to the impossibility of doing harm, which paralyzed his guilty inclinations. Thanks to the profound solitude in which he had lived in Bras-rouge's cavern, remorse had, as has been shown, worn into his iron soul. By being compelled to concentrate his mind in incessant meditation, the recollection of his past crimes constantly reverted to him. Cut off from all communication with the outer world, his ideas at last assumed some shape; the fitful fancies of his brain, as he had said to Chouette. Then the features of his victims would appear to him. But it was not madness; it was the power of recollection carried to its greatest height. Thus this man, yet in the prime of life, with an athletic constitution—this man, who had, doubtless, still many years to live—this man, who still enjoyed the full possession of his reason, was to pass his lingering years among madmen, and without uttering a word. If not—if he should be discovered—he would be dragged to the scaffold, there to expiate the new murders he had committed, or he would be condemned to perpetual seclusion among wretches, for whom he felt a horror which augmented in proportion to his repentance.

The Schoolmaster was sitting on a bench—a forest of gray hair covered his hideous and enormous head; one elbow was placed upon his knee, and his chin rested upon one hand. Although this frightful mask was deprived of eyesight, his nose burnt off by vitriol, and his mouth deformed, an overpowering and invincible despair was visible in this monstrous face.

One of the madmen, a youth, with a melancholy but benevolent countenance, was on his knees before the Schoolmaster, holding one of his powerful hands between his own, and looking at him with kindness—and with a soft voice, kept incessantly repeating these words only: "Some strawberries!—some strawberries!—some strawberries!"

"That is the only conversation!" exclaimed the learned madman, "that this idiot can address to the blind man. His bodily eyes may be closed for ever, but those of his mind are doubtless open; and he will feel thankful if I should place myself in communication with him!"

"I do not doubt," said the doctor, "while the poor melancholy-looking lad contemplated the hideous face of the Schoolmaster with compassion, and repeated, in his sweet voice, "Some strawberries—some strawberries—some strawberries!"

"Since his entrance here, that poor idiot has never pronounced any words but those," said the doctor to Madam George, who was looking at the Schoolmaster with horror. "I cannot discover what mysterious event is connected with these words."

"Heavens! my dear mother!" said Germain to Madam George; "how overwhelmed you appear at the sight of that poor blind man!"

"'T is true, my son," replied Madam George; "my heart is wofully oppressed; the sight of him quite pains me. How distressing 'tis to see humanity under so mournful an aspect."

Madam George had hardly pronounced these words, when the Schoolmaster shuddered—his rugged face became pale, even under his scars. He raised and turned his head so quickly toward the place where Germain's mother stood, that the latter could not help screaming, although she did not know who the miserable object was. The Schoolmaster had recognized the voice of his wife; and her words informed him that she was speaking to his son.

"What is the matter with you, mother?" cried Germain.

"Nothing, my child, but the movement that man made; the expression of his face; all this alarmed me. Pray, sir, forgive my weakness," added she, addressing the doctor; "I almost regret having yielded to my curiosity in accompanying my son here."

"It is only for once, my mother; there is nothing to be sorry for."

"It is very certain that our good mother will never return here; nor we either, my dear Germain, shall we! it is so melancholy," said Rigolette; "it tears one's heart."

"Come! come! you are a little coward—is she not; doctor? is not my wife a coward?" said Germain, smiling.

"I acknowledge," said the doctor, "that the sight of this unhappy blind and dumb man, has affected me—even me, who have seen misery in so many forms."

"What a horrid looking creature, eh! old dear," said Anastasia, whispering; "well, in comparison with you, all men appear as hideous to me as that frightful figure; and not one of them can boast I ever gave them any encouragement!"

"Oh! Anastasia! I shall dream of that horrible face, that 's certain—it will give me the nightmare."

"My friend," said the doctor to the Schoolmaster, "how is your health?"

The Schoolmaster remained mute.

"Do you not hear me, then?" rejoined the doctor, touching him gently on the shoulder.

The Schoolmaster did not answer; he bowed down his head. After some seconds, from his sightless eyes there fell a tear.

"He weeps!" said the doctor.

"Poor man!" added Germain, with compassion.

The Schoolmaster shuddered—he had again heard the voice of his son—his son had felt compassionately toward him!

"What is the matter with you? what grief is there that afflicts you?" said the doctor.

The Schoolmaster, without uttering a word, hid his face within his hands.

"We shall not learn anything from him," said the doctor.

"Leave him to me, and I will console him," said the learned madman, with an air of much gravity and pretension. "I will demonstrate to him that all the different kinds of orthagonal superfices in which the three systems are isothermal, are, first, those of superfices of the secondary order—second, those of ellipsoidical revolution around the smaller axis or the greater axis—third, those—but, no, no," added the madman, changing his mind, after reflecting a little, "I will converse with him upon the planetary system," and then addressing himself to the young idiot, who was still kneeling before the Schoolmaster, "you, with your strawberries, begone from this."

"My good lad," said the doctor to the young idiot, "every one of you must, in his turn, lead the blind man and talk to him: let your companion take your place."

The young idiot instantly obeyed; rose up, looked timidly at the doctor, with his large blue eyes, showed his respect to him by a bow, gave a sign of leave-taking to the Schoolmaster, and withdrew, repeating—"Some strawberries! some strawberries!"

The doctor, perceiving the painful impression which this scene had left upon the mind of Madam George, said to her, "Happily, madam, we are now going to Morel; and, should my hopes be realized, your heart will rejoice at seeing this excellent man restored to the tenderness of his worthy wife and daughter." And then the doctor went on, followed by the whole party.

The schoolmaster remained alone with the learned madman, who began to explain to him—and very learnedly, very eloquently—the wonderful courses of the stars, which silently describe their immense circles in the skies; but the Schoolmaster was not listening to him.

He was reflecting, with profound despair, that he should never again hear the voice of his son, or of his wife. Aware of the just horror which he inspired in them—of the misery, the disgrace, the alarm, he would have plunged them into, had he revealed his name—he would rather have endured a thousand deaths, than to have discovered himself to them. One last consolation remained to him. For one moment he had inspired his son with pity toward himself; and, in spite of himself, he called to mind those words which Rodolphe had addressed to him before inflicting his terrible chastisement:

"Each word which is now a blasphemy, will then be a prayer. In your power, you are hard-hearted and merciless: in your weakness, you will be gentle and kind. Your heart, now steeled against remorse, will one day bleed for your victims. You have degraded the reason with which God has endowed you; you have reduced it to a mere beastly instinct for prey and for blood: but one day your reason will be revivified by your expiation—will be exalted by the consciousness of pardon. Thus far, you have not spared what the ferocious monarch of the woods respects—the female and her offspring: but the remainder of your life will be devoted to atoning for your crimes, and your

last prayer will crave from God the boon of dying in the arms of your wife and child.

"We are about to pass before the idiot's yard, and we shall then arrive at the house in which Morel is waiting," said the doctor, as he went out of the yard in which he left the Schoolmaster

CHAPTER XVIII. ..... MOREL THE LAPIDARY.

NOTWITHSTANDING the mournful feelings which the sight of these poor madmen had inspired in her mind, Madam George could not avoid stopping for a moment, while passing before a railed yard, in which were inclosed the incurable idiots. Poor miserable beings, who often have not even the instinct of animals; and whose origin even, is almost always unknown—unknown to all, and even to themselves; they thus pass through life, absolute strangers to feeling, and to thought, experiencing only the most limited animal wants.

If madness does not at once reveal itself to the superficial observer, by the mere inspection of a madman's countenance, it is, on the contrary, but too easy to recognize the physical characteristics of idiocy.

It was not necessary for Doctor Herbin to point out to Madam George, the expression of savage brutality, of stupid insensibility, or of gaping vacancy, which imprinted on the features of these miserable creatures, an expression hideous and painful to behold. They were, almost all of them, dressed in long and mean loose frocks, in tatters; for, notwithstanding every possible attention on the part of the keepers, these wretched beings, absolutely deprived of instinct and of reason, could not be prevented from tearing, and soiling their clothing, by dragging themselves along, or rolling like animals in the mud and dirt of the yards, where they remain during the day.

Some of them, huddled together in the dark corners of a shed, which protects from the sun or rain, rolled up, or crouching like animals in their holes, and continually making a mournful humming sort of noise. Others, standing upright, their backs against a wall, mute, immovable, and looking steadfastly at the sun.

An old man, of enormous obesity, was sitting upon a wooden chair, devouring his pittance with animal voraciousness, and turning from one side to the other with oblique and angry looks.

Some were walking hurriedly round a small circle, to which they had limited themselves—this singular exercise continued, uninterruptedly, for hours.

Others, sitting on the ground, were balancing themselves, by throwing their bodies backward and forward alternately, and only interrupted this monotony by whirling movements, by shouts of laughter—that shrieking, guttural laughter, so common among idiots.

There were others, finally, who, in a state of complete annihilation, only opened their eyes at meal times, and remained inert, inanimate, deaf, dumb, and blind, without uttering a sound or a cry; without even making a gesture, to give evidence of their vitality.

The complete absence of all verbal or intelligible communication, is one of the most mournful characteristics of an assemblage of idiots. Madmen, notwithstanding the incoherency of their words and of their thoughts, speak to each other, know and seek each other out; but between idiots there reigns a stupid indifference, a savage isolation. They are never heard to utter an articulate word; from time to time they break out in savage laughter, or utter moans and cries having no human sound; but few among them even know their keepers. And yet—let us here repeat it with admiration—out of respect to the *creature*, these miserable beings, who appear no longer appertaining to our species, and not even to the animal species, from the complete annihilation of their intellectual faculties; these beings, although known to be utterly incurable, and who appear to have more affinity to the molluscan order than to animated beings, but who still drag through all the phases of a prolonged existence, are surrounded by the most tender cares, and by comforts of the existence of which they are not sensible.

There can be no doubt, that it is good thus to respect the principle of human dignity, even in the miserable beings who possess nothing in common with mankind, except the exterior form; but let us again repeat, we ought also to value the dignity of those who, endowed with all their intellects and full of zeal and activity, form the living power of the nation; to instil into them the consciousness of this moral dignity, by encouraging it, by rewarding it where it manifests itself by love of industry, by labor, by honesty; and not to say to it, with a semi-orthodox egotism, "Let us punish here below—God will reward above."

"Poor people!" said Madam George, following the doctor, after having thrown a last look into the idiots' yard; "how mournful it is, to think there is no remedy for these evils!"

"None, alas! madam," replied the doctor; "and above all, when they have arrived at this age; for now, thanks to the progress of science, idiot children receive a sort of education, which at least developes the atom of incomplete intelligence with which they are sometimes endowed. We have a school here,* conducted with infinite perseverance and enlightened patience, which has already produced the most satisfactory results. By very ingenious methods, and which are exclusively adapted to their positions, we exercise at once the moral and the physical powers of these poor children; and many of them at last get so far as to know letters, figures, and to distinguish colors. We have even succeeded in teaching them to sing in chorus; and I assure you, madam, there is a peculiar charm, at once sorrowful and touching, in hearing their strange, plaintive, sometimes even pain-exciting voices, raising to Heaven in a hymn, the words of which, although French, are unintelligible to them. But we have now arrived at the building in which we shall find Morel. I recommended that he should be left completely alone this morning, in order that the effect which I hope to produce upon him may have the greater scope."

"What is the nature of his madness, sir?" whispered Madam George to the doctor, that Louise might not overhear her.

"He imagines, that if he cannot earn thirteen hundred francs by his day's work, to pay a debt he has contracted with a notary named Ferrand, Louise must die upon the scaffold, being convicted of infanticide."

"Ah! sir, this notary was a monster!" exclaimed Madam George, who was aware of the hatred of this man against Germain. "Louise Morel, her father, are not his only victims; he persecuted my son with a most pitiless animosity."

"Louise Morel has told me all," replied the doctor. "Thanks to Heaven! that miserable wretch has ceased to exist. But have the goodness to wait for me here, a minute, with these good people; I will go and see how Morel is;" and then, addressing the daughter of the lapidary, "I beg, Louise, that you will be attentively upon the watch, and at the moment you shall hear me cry out, 'Come,' immediately rush in, but alone; when I say, 'Come,' a second time, the rest of the party will come in."

"Ah! sir, my heart fails me," said Louise, wiping away her tears; "my poor father! Should this trial prove ineffectual!"

"I hope that it will save him. For a long time past I have been preparing it. Come, be comforted; and remember the instructions I have given you." And the doctor, leaving the persons who had accompanied him, went into a room, the grated windows of which opened upon a garden.

Thanks to repose, a healthy diet, and the attention which had been shown him, the face of Morel was no longer pale, ghastly, and worn down by illness; his cheeks were well filled out, and, slightly tinged, gave evidence of the return of health; but a melancholy smile, a fixed look, which still gave a rigidity to his countenance, proved that his reason was not completely reëstablished.

When the doctor went into the room, Morel was sitting near and leaning upon a table, pretending to work at his trade of a lapidary, muttering, "Thirteen hundred francs—thirteen hundred francs; or, if not, Louise upon the scaffold. Thirteen hundred francs—I must work—I must work—I must work."

This aberration, of which the recurrence had become less and less frequent, had always been the primary symptom of his madness. The doctor was at first much annoyed, to find that Morel should then be under the influence of this monomania; but, on reflection, hoped to make this circumstance aid his plans. He took from his pocket a purse, containing seventy-five louis, which he had expressly provided himself with; he poured this gold into his hand, and abruptly said to Morel, who, being deeply absorbed in his pretended work, had not perceived the entrance of the doctor, "My good Morel, you have worked enough; you have, at last, earned the thirteen hundred francs you require to save Louise; there they are;" and the doctor threw the gold upon the table.

"Louise is saved!" exclaimed the lapidary, eagerly gathering up the money; "I will run to the notary's;" and, rising hurriedly, he ran toward the door.

"Come!" cried the doctor, with the most lively anxiety; for the instantaneous cure of the lapidary, might mainly depend upon this first impression.

He had hardly uttered the word, "Come," when Louise appeared at the door, at the very moment that her father reached it. Morel, astounded, drew back two paces, letting the gold fall. During some minutes, he gazed upon Louise with profound amazement, but did not yet recognize her; he appeared, how-

* This school is another institution of the most curious and interesting nature

ever, to be endeavoring to recall his recollection; and then, gently approaching her, by degrees, he looked at her with timid and anxious curiosity. Louise, trembling with her emotions, with difficulty restrained her tears; while the doctor, who, by a sign, advised her to remain quiet, was attentively and silently watching the slightest movement of the lapidary's features. The latter, still leaning toward his daughter, began to turn pale; he passed both hands over his forehead, which was inundated with perspiration; and then, making another step toward her, he was about to speak to her. His voice died on his lips; his paleness increased, and he looked around him in surprise, as if he were, little by little, awaking from a dream.

"Well! very well!" said the doctor, whispering to Louise; this is a good sign. When I say 'Come,' throw yourself into his arms, and call him father."

The lapidary placed his hands upon his chest, and looked at himself, if we may so express it, from head to foot, as if to assure himself of his own identity. His features expressed a painful uncertainty; instead of fixing his eyes upon his daughter, he appeared to wish to escape her sight. Then, saying to himself, in a low tone, and broken accents, "No—no—a dream—where am I? 'Tis impossible—a dream—it is not she——" and then, seeing the pieces of gold scattered about the floor: "and this gold?—I cannot remember. I am waking, then? My head turns round. I do not dare to look—I am ashamed—it is not Louise."

"Come!" said the doctor, in a loud voice.

"My father! look at me, then, my own dear father! I am Louise, your daughter!" cried she, bursting into tears, and throwing herself into the lapidary's arms, at the same moment that his wife, Rigolette, Madam George, Germain and the Pipelets, came into the room.

"Oh! gracious God!" exclaimed Morel, whom Louise was overwhelming with caresses; "where am I? what is it that they want? what can have happened? I cannot believe——" and then, after a few moments' silence, he hurriedly caught Louise's head between his hands, looked at her with fixed attention, and, his emotions increasing every instant, exclaimed, "Louise!"

"He is saved!" said the doctor.

"My husband! my poor Morel!" cried the wife of the lapidary, hurrying toward him.

"My wife!" rejoined Morel; "my wife and my daughter!"

"And I, too, Mr. Morel!" said Rigolette; "all your friends had appointed to meet here."

"All your friends, you see, Mr. Morel!" added Germain.

"Mademoiselle Rigolette! Mr. Germain!" said the lapidary, recognizing every person, with increased astonishment.

"And your old friends from the lodge!" said Anastasia, approaching him, in her turn, with Alfred. "Here are the Pipelets, the old Pipelets; friends for life, be assured, father Morel. What a happy day this is!"

"Mr. Pipelet and his wife! so many friends around me! It appears to me that it is a long time since—but, it is you, Louise—is it not, Louise?" exclaimed he, transportedly, and pressing his daughter in his arms; "is it you, Louise?—quite sure?"

"Yes, my poor father! yes. It is I! Here's my mother! Here are all your friends. You will not leave us any more—your troubles are all over. We shall all be happy now—all of us."

"All happy!—but—wait a little till I recollect myself—all happy! But I appear to remember that they came to take you to prison, Louise!"

"Yes, father; but I have got out again—acquitted—you see that here I am, with you."

"Stay! stay! my memory is returning to me!" and then the lapidary rejoined with terror: "And the notary!"

"He is dead."

"Dead! he dead! Then I believe you. We may still be happy. But where am I? how did I come here? how long since? and for what? I cannot at all remember——"

"You have been so ill, sir," said the doctor, "that you have been brought here, into the country. You have had a fever—a very violent fever; attended with delirium."

"Yes, yes! I recollect—the last thing that I remember—before my illness, was that I was talking with my daughter, and who—who was it? Ah! yes—a very generous man—Mr. Rodolphe—yes. He had prevented my being arrested—after that, I really remember nothing."

"Your illness was complicated by a loss of memory," said the doctor. "The sight of your daughter—of your wife—and of your friends—has restored it to you."

"And in whose house am I, then?"

"In the house of a friend—of Mr. Rodolphe," Germain hastened to say. "It was thought that change of air would be serviceable to you."

"Very well said," observed the doctor quietly, and addressing one of the keepers, he said: "Send the coach to the end of the garden-alley, so that it may not have to cross the yards, and to go out at the great gate."

As is frequently the case in madness, Morel had no sort of recollection, or consciousness, of the alienation of mind with which he had been attacked. Some minutes afterward, leaning on the arms of his wife and daughter, and accompanied by an assistant-surgeon, who from prudent motives the doctor had sent in charge of him as far as Paris, Morel got into the hackney-coach, and left Bicêtre, without at all suspecting, that he had ever been confined there as a madman.

"You believe that poor man completely cured," said Madam George to the doctor, who was accompanying her as far as the principal entrance to Bicêtre.

"I believe so, madam; and I wished expressly to leave him under the happy influence of the reunion with his family. I should have feared to have separated him from them. Besides which, one of my pupils will remain with him, and will point out the regimen that is to be observed; and I will myself visit him every day, until his recovery is completely confirmed—for, not only does he interest me much, but he was also most particularly recommended to my care on his entrance here, by the Chargé d'Affaires of the Grand Duke of Gerolstein."

Germain and his mother, exchanged significant glances.

"I am greatly obliged to you, sir," said Madam George, "for the kindness with which you have permitted me to visit this fine establishment; and I congratulate myself on having been present at this touching scene, which your knowledge had so skillfully combined and prognosticated."

"And I doubly congratulate myself, madam, on this success which restores so excellent a man to the affection of his family."

Some moments afterward, Madam George, Rigolette and Germain, had left Bicêtre, together with Mr. and Madam Pipelet.

At the instant of Dr. Herbin's returning into the yard, he met one of the superior officers of the establishment, who said to him, "Ah! my dear Mr. Herbin, you will never imagine the scene which I have just witnessed. For an observer, like yourself, it would have been an inexhaustible source."

"How is this? what scene?"

"You know that we have here two women, condemned to death, a mother and daughter, and who are to be executed to-morrow."

"I am aware of that."

"Well: in my life, I have never witnessed such audacity and self-possession, as that of the mother—she is, really, an infernal woman."

"You mean the widow Martial, who evinced such shamelessness during her trial?"

"The same!"

"And what has she been doing now?"

"She had requested to be confined in the same cell with her daughter, until the moment of her execution. Her request had been complied with; her daughter, who is much less hardened than herself, appeared to soften as the fatal moment drew near; whereas, the diabolical boldness of the widow continued to increase, if it be possible. Just now, the venerable almoner of the prison entered their dungeon to offer them the consolations of religion. The daughter was preparing herself to accept them, when her mother, without for one instant losing her icy calmness, overwhelmed both her and the almoner with such frightful sarcasms, that this venerable priest was compelled to leave the dungeon, after having in vain, endeavored to make this indomitable woman, listen to some holy words."

"On the eve of mounting the scaffold, such hardness of heart is really demoniacal," said the doctor.

"Besides, one would call them a family pursued by the Destinies, mentioned in ancient history. The father died upon the scaffold; one of their sons is at the galleys; another, also, condemned to death, has lately escaped. The elder son, and two young children, are the only ones who have escaped this frightful contagion. And yet, this woman had sent to ask this eldest son—the only honest man of all this miserable race—to come to-morrow morning to hear her last wishes."

"What an interview!"

"Do you not feel some curiosity to be present at it?"

"Frankly—I say, I would not. You know my principles with regard to punishment by death. I have no occasion to witness so dreadful a scene, to fortify me in my opinions. If this horrible woman carries her indomitable audacity with her to the scaffold, what a deplorable example will it offer to the people!

There is something, also, in this twofold execution, which appears singular to me—it is the day they have chosen for it to take place upon."

"What do you mean?"

"It is to-day Mid-Lent."

"Well?"

"The execution is to take place to-morrow, at seven o'clock. Thus, bands of people in masks, who will have passed this night in the faubourg balls, will necessarily meet, on reentering Paris, the melancholy procession."

It should also be taken into consideration, that from the place of execution, Barriere St. Jacques, the noise of the music from the neighboring dancing-gardens can be heard; and that, in order to celebrate the last day of the carnival, the people dance in those places even until ten and eleven o'clock in the morning.

The sun rose the next morning with more than usual splendor. At four o'clock, several picquets of infantry and cavalry surrounded and guarded the different avenues leading to Bicêtre.

We will now conduct our reader into the dungeon where the widow of the executed felon and his daughter Calebasse, were confined together.

CHAPTER XIX..... THE TOILET.

In Bicêtre there is a gloomy corridor, having a few grated windows, being so many loop-holes situated a little above the level of a court-yard, which leads to the dungeon for criminals condemned to death.

The only light which this dungeon received, was through a large wicket made in the upper part of the door, which opened into the gloomy passage already mentioned.

In this dungeon, with its low ceiling, its damp and mouldy walls, and its floor, paved with stones as cold as the pavement of a sepulchre, were the widow Martial and her daughter Calebasse confined.

The harsh features of the widow of the executed felon—as hard, insensible, and wan as a marble-mask, stood out in strong relief, amid the obscurity which pervaded the dungeon.

Deprived of the use of her hands—for under her black dress she wore a straight-jacket—a sort of long spencer, of coarse, gray linen, laced behind her back, the arms of which are closed at the end in form of a bag. She requested that her cap might be taken off, complaining of great heat in her head. Her gray hair fell spreading around her shoulders. Seated on the side of her bed, her feet resting upon the stones, she was gazing fixedly at her daughter Calebasse, who was on the opposite side of the dungeon.

The latter was reclining against the wall, half-lying on her bed. She also had a straight-jacket. Her head was bent upon her chest; her eyes fixed; her breathing much oppressed. With the exception of a slightly convulsive trembling, which, from time to time, agitated her lower lip, her features appeared tolerably calm, notwithstanding their livid pallor.

Within the dungeon, but at the end, near the door, and under the open wicket, a veteran soldier, decorated with the cross of the Legion of Honor, with a rough and weather-beaten face, bald head, and long gray mustaches, was seated upon a chair. He was placed there to guard the prisoners, and keep them always in his sight.

"There is an icy coldness here, and yet my eyes are burning; and then, I am thirsty—always thirsty," said Calebasse, after some minutes silence. Then addressing the veteran, she added, "Some water, if you please, sir."

The old soldier rose, took from a basket a pewter pitcher full of water, filled a glass with it, went over to Calebasse, and putting the glass to her mouth, let her drink it slowly, the straight-jacket preventing the convict from using her own hands. After having eagerly drank it, she said, "I am obliged to you, sir."

"Do you wish to drink?" said the soldier to the widow. The latter replied by giving a negative motion of her head.

The veteran sat down again. A silence of some duration then ensued. "What o'clock is it, sir?" asked Calebasse.

"It will soon be half-past four," said the soldier.

"In three hours," rejoined Calebasse, with a sardonic and bitter smile, alluding to the time fixed for her execution—"in three hours——" she did not dare to conclude her sentence.

The widow shrugged her shoulders disdainfully. Her daughter comprehended what was passing in her mind, and she continued: "You have more courage than I have, mother. You have never known what it is to fear—you——"

"Never."

"I know it well. I see it well. Your features are as calm as if you were now sitting in our chimney corner. Ah! those good times are far distant—far distant!"

"You incessant talker!"

"It is true, instead of remaining there thinking, without saying anything, I like better to talk; I like better——"

"To drown your thoughts, coward!"

"Even if it were so, you can't expect every one to have your courage. I've done all I can to imitate you; I would not listen to the priest, because you would not; but I was, perhaps, wrong, after all; for, in short," added the sentenced girl, shuddering, "after all, who knows? hereafter is very soon—it is within——"

"Within three hours."

"How coolly you say that, my mother! but, good God! it is true! To think that now we are both here—that we are not sick—that we do not wish to die—and yet, within three hours——"

"In three hours you will have terminated your life like a true Martial! you will lie in the dark: that is all!"

"It is not right to speak thus to your daughter," said the old soldier, in a deliberate and grave voice; "it would have been better to have allowed her to listen to the priest."

The widow shrugged her shoulders again, with ferocious contempt; and continued to address Calebasse, without turning her head toward the veteran: "Courage! my daughter; we will show them that women have more heart than men, with their priests and sacraments—the cowards!"

"Commander Le Blond was the bravest officer of the third regiment of chasseurs; and I saw him, cut up with wounds in the breach of Saragossa, die, while he signed himself with the cross."

"You were his sacristan, then," said the widow, bursting into a wild laugh.

"I was his soldier," replied the veteran, mildly; "it was to show you that one who is no coward, can pray when dying."

Calebasse looked attentively at the sun-burnt visage of the man—a perfect type of the soldier of the Empire—a deep scar seamed his left cheek, and was lost beneath his heavy gray mustache. The simple words of the veteran, whose features, scars, stripes, and red ribbon announced that his courage had been tried in battles, made a deep impression upon the daughter of the widow she had rejected the consolations of the priest, more through fear of the sarcasms of her mother, than through insensibility: and in her last thoughts she opposed the convictions of the soldier to the sacrilegious railleries of the widow. She was convinced, by his testimony, that she could listen, without having her courage impeached, to that religious instinct to which intrepid men had yielded.

She continued, with anguish—"Why did I not listen to the priest? there is no weakness in that; besides, it would have stunned my senses—and then again, who knows what will happen hereafter?"

"Again," said the widow, with a look of overpowering contempt, "it is a pity that we have no more time—you might be made a nun: the arrival of your brother Martial would complete your conversion; but the good son, the honest man, will not come."

At the moment the widow spoke these words, the huge key of the door turned in the lock, and the door was opened.

"Already!" exclaimed Calebasse, with a convulsive start—"they have anticipated the hour! they have deceived!" and her face assumed a ghastly expression.

"So much the better; if the watch of the hangman is too fast, you will have less time to disgrace me."

"Madam," said one of the satellites of the prison, to the condemned woman, with that sort of commiseration which death inspires, "your son has arrived; do you wish to see him?"

"Yes," replied the widow, without turning her head.

"Come in, sir," said the attendant.

Martial entered. The veteran remained in the dungeon, the door of which was left open, by way of precaution. Through the shadow of the hall, lighted by a lamp and the dawn of day, several soldiers were seen; some seated upon a bench, and others standing.

Martial was as pale as his mother; his features expressed horror and anguish; his knees trembled under him. In spite of the crimes of that woman, in spite of the aversion she had always shown him, he thought that it was his duty to obey her last wishes. As soon as he entered the dungeon, the widow cast upon him a piercing look, and said to him in an angry voice, as if to arouse bitter hatred in the soul of her son—

"You see what they are about to do to your mother and sister."

"It is frightful, mother! but, alas! I forewarned you of it."

The widow compressed her lips in anger—her son did not understand her. She continued—"They are going to kill us, as they did your father."

"Good God! and I can do nothing to aid you! Why did not you and my sister listen to me? you would not have been here now!"

"Ah! I see how it is," said the widow, with her habitual sneer; "you regard our punishment as just."

"My mother!"

"You are happy now; for you will be able to say, without lying, that your mother is dead, and you will not blush for her."

"If I were a bad son," said Martial, shocked at the cruelty of his mother, "I should not be here."

"You come through curiosity."

"I come in obedience to your request."

"If I had listened to you, Martial, instead of listening to my mother, I should not have been here!" exclaimed Calebasse, with a distressing voice, and yielding to the anguish and terror, which the influence of the widow had thus far restrained; "it is your fault mother—may you be cursed!"

"She repents, she accuses me; you must enjoy it," said the widow to her son, with a peal of diabolical laughter.

"Without answering his mother, Martial approached Calebasse, whose agony had commenced, and said to her with compassion:

"It is now too late, my poor sister."

"Never too late to be a coward," said the mother; "what a race! what a race! Fortunately Nicholas has escaped; happily François and Amandine will escape from you also, they are already vicious, and misery will do the rest."

"Ah! Martial, watch them closely, or they will die like their mother and sister," said Calebasse; "they will be beheaded also!"

"It will be in vain for him to watch!" exclaimed the widow, with ferocious exultation; "vice and misery are stronger than he, and some day they will avenge father, mother, and sister."

"Your horrible expectation will be disappointed, my mother," replied Martial, indignantly; "neither they nor I will ever dread misery. Louve saved the life of the young girl whom Nicholas attempted to drown; the relations have offered a large sum of money or a smaller sum, with land in Algeria, by the side of a farm which they have already given to a man who has rendered them great service. We have preferred the land; 't is attended with danger, but that suits Louve and myself. We start to-morrow with the children, and never expect to return to Europe."

"Do you speak the truth?" said the widow to Martial, in a tone of irritated surprise.

"I never lie!"

"You lie to-day, to excite my anger!"

"You are angry because the prosperity of your children is secure!"

"Yes! they will make lambs out of young wolves—the blood of our father, your sister, and my own will not be avenged!"

"Do not speak thus, in this awful moment!"

"I have killed! I am to be killed! we are quits!"

"I beseech you, mother, repent!"

The widow burst out into a new peal of laughter.

"I have lived for thirty years in crime, and they have given me three days, with death at the end of them, to repent for thirty years; is that time enough? No! no! when my head falls it will grin with rage and hatred!"

"Help! help! brother! take me from this place, they are coming!" muttered Calebasse, in a fainting voice; for the wretched woman began to rave.

"Will you be silent!" said the widow, exasperated by the wretchedness of Calebasse; "will you be silent, the infamous one! And she is my daughter!"

"Mother! mother!" exclaimed Martial, overpowered by this horrible scene, "why did you send for me?"

"Because, I thought I could inspire you with some courage and hatred; but he who is without the one, cannot have the other, coward!"

"Mother!"

"Coward! coward!"

At this moment the sound of steps was heard in the corridor; the veteran pulled out his watch, looked at the hour, and arose. The sun which was just rising, dazzling and glorious, threw into the corridor its brilliant rays, through the open door.

The entrance to the dungeon was thus radiant with sunbeams. In the midst of the luminous zone which was traced upon the floor, two guards placed two chairs, and the jailer informed the widow, in a moved voice, "Madam, it is time!"

The sentenced woman stood upright, perfectly calm; but Calebasse uttered distressing cries. Four men entered the dungeon; three of them, meanly dressed, held in their hands bundles of small, but strong cord. The latter of the four, dressed in black, wearing a round hat and a white cravat, gave to the jailer a paper—that man was the executioner! The paper which he gave, was a receipt for the two convicts who were to be guillotined. The executioner was now to take possession of these two creatures of God, and be henceforth solely responsible for them.

To the desperate fright of Calebasse, a torpor had succeeded Two of the executioner's aids were obliged to seat her upon the bed, and support her in that position; her jaws were forced together by convulsions, and a few disconnected words only, could escape; she rolled around her eyes, which had lost all expression; her chin dropped upon her breast, and without the support of the two aids, her body would have fallen an inanimate mass. Martial having embraced, for the last time, the unfortunate wretch, remained immovable and terrified, unable to advance a step; paralyzed by this terrible scene. The cold audacity of the widow sustained her to the last; bearing her head upright, she released herself from the straight-jacket which restrained her movements, and appeared in a black woollen dress.

"Where shall I go?" she asked in a firm tone.

"Have the kindness to be seated in one of these chairs," said the executioner to her, pointing to one of the two chairs placed at the entrance of the dungeon.

The door having been left open, they saw in the corridor, the director of the prison, some guards, and a few men, whom privilege entitled to satisfy their curiosity. The widow walked with a bold step to the place assigned her, and when she passed before her daughter, she stopped, and said to her, in a voice which was slightly moved, "My daughter, embrace me!"

At the voice of her mother, Calebasse awoke from her apathy, raised her head, and with a gesture of indignation, exclaimed:

"If there is a hell, may you go there, cursed one!"

"My daughter, embrace me!" said the widow again, advancing a step.

"Do not approach me; you have ruined me!" exclaimed the unfortunate girl, throwing forward her hands to repulse her mother.

"Pardon me!"

"No! no!" said Calebasse, with a convulsed voice; and her strength being exhausted by the effort, she fell back almost senseless, into the arms of the aids.

A cloud passed over the impassible brow of the widow, for an instant her dry and burning eyes became moist, and at that moment encountered the gaze of her son.

After a short hesitation, as if she had yielded to some struggle in her own breast, she said to him:

"And you!"

Martial rushed, sobbing, into his mother's arms.

"Enough!" said the widow, overcoming her emotion and releasing herself from the embrace of her son: "the gentleman is waiting," she added, pointing to the executioner, and she walked rapidly toward the chair, in which she seated herself resolutely. The spark of maternal sensibility which, for a moment had lighted up the dark abyss of that soul, was suddenly extinguished.

"Sir!" said the veteran to Martial, "do not remain here, come with me."

Martial, bewildered with horror and affright, unconsciously followed the soldier.

The two aids had conveyed to the chair the agonized daughter. One of them supported her almost lifeless body, while the other bound her hands behind her back with the cords, in intricate knots, and bound a cord also around her ancles, sufficiently long to permit her to walk.

This operation was, at the same time, strange and horrible; one might have said that the long thin cords, which were scarcely distinguishable in the shade—with which the men were silently binding the sentenced woman, passed through their hands like the web of a spider entangling the victim before devouring it.

The executioner and his active aid were binding the widow with equal agility, but not the least change came over her features. At intervals, however, she coughed slightly. When the culprit was thus rendered unable to move, the executioner, drawing from his pocket a long pair of shears, said to her with politeness:

"Have the kindness, madam, to bend your head."

The widow stooped down her head saying—"Our family are good customers; you have had my husband once, now you have his wife and daughter."

The executioner, without reply, gathered in his hands the long gray locks of the culprit, and began cutting them off very close, particularly on the back part of the head.

"This will make the third time that my head has been dressed in the course of my life," said the widow, with a gloomy sneer. "The day of my first communion, when a veil was put on my head; my wedding day, when they put orange blossoms in my hair; and, finally, to-day;—is it not so, death's barber?"

The executioner remained silent. The culprit's hair was so thick and hard, the operation lasted so long, that the locks of Calebasse were entirely removed, before those of her mother were half off.

"You do not know what I am thinking about," said the widow to the executioner, casting another look toward her daughter.

The executioner continued to preserve silence. Nothing was heard but the clashing of the scissors, and a sort of hiccup which now and then expanded Calebasse's breast. At that moment a priest, with a venerable face, was seen in the corridor. He approached the director of the prison, and conversed with him in a low voice. This holy man came to make a final effort to arouse the widow from her insensibility.

"I think," continued the widow, after a few moments, observing that the executioner made no reply; "I think that my daughter, whose head is going to be cut off, was the prettiest child in the world when she was five years old. Her hair was auburn, and her cheeks rosy and white. Who could have foretold that——" and after a moment's silence, she exclaimed, with a burst of laughter, and an indescribable expression of countenance, "what a farce this life is!"

As she spoke these words, the last locks of the culprit fell from her shoulders.

"It is done, madam," said the executioner, civilly.

"Thank you. I will recommend you to my son, Nicholas," said the widow; "you will have his hair to trim one of these days."

A jailer now came and whispered a few words to the condemned woman.

"No! I have already said no!" she replied, roughly.

The priest heard these words, raised his eyes to heaven, clasped his hands and disappeared.

"We are about to start, madam: will you not take something to eat?" said the executioner.

"Thank you—to-night I will take a mouthful of earth;" and the widow, after this new sarcasm, stood upright. Her hands were bound behind her back, and a cord sufficiently long to allow her to walk, connected her ancles. Although her step was firm and resolute, the executioner and his aid kindly volunteered to assist her. She made a gesture of impatience, and said, in a harsh and imperious tone, "Do not touch me—I have a sure foot and a good eye;—on the scaffold you will see that I have a good voice, and whether it speaks any words of repentance." And the widow, attended by the executioner and his aid, left the dungeon and entered the corridor. The two other assistants were obliged to support Calebasse upon her chair. She was in a dying condition. After having passed through the long hall, the gloomy procession ascended a stone staircase, which led to an exterior yard. The sun poured down its warm and radiant beams upon the high walls which surrounded the yard—the sky was beautifully blue—the air was mild and balmy;—never was there a more pleasant and smiling day. In the yard a piquet of gen-d'armes was seen, a hackney coach, and a long narrow vehicle, painted yellow, drawn by three post-horses, which neighed in a sprightly manner, and shook the bells on their harness. The entrance into the vehicle was through a door behind, as in an omnibus, which gave occasion to a final joke from the widow.

"The conductor will not say 'all full,'" said she. She then ascended the carriage, as actively as her manacles would permit. Calebasse, almost expiring, was placed in the vehicle opposite her mother, and the door was locked.

The driver of the hackney-coach had fallen asleep, and the executioner shook him.

"Excuse me, master," said the driver, waking up and jumping from the seat; "but a carnival night is a hard one. I had just taken to the Vandanges de Bourgogne, a crowd of dissipated dogs, with their women, who were singing merrily all the way. When you engage me by the hour, I——"

"Sufficient!—follow that vehicle to the boulevard Saint Jacques."

"Excuse me, master; an hour ago to the Vandanges, and now to the guillotine!—that proves that trips may follow, but not resemble each other," as some one says.

The two carriages, preceded and followed by a piquet of gen-d'arms, proceeded on full trot toward Paris.

We have presented the toilet scene of the condemned, in all its frightful truthfulness; because we believe that this picture offers powerful arguments, both against the penalty of death, and against the application of that penalty, as well as against the effect that is produced by its example, upon the populace.

Although despoiled of this formidable and religious preparation, which should, at least, accompany every act of severe chastisement that the law inflicts, in the name of a vindictive public; the toilet—notwithstanding it is the most frightful accompaniment of an execution—is concealed from the multitude. In Spain, on the contrary, the condemned remains exposed during three days, in a lighted chapel, with his coffin constantly before him; priests utter the prayers of the dying; and the church bells toll night and day, the funeral knell.

It is evident that this species of initiation in an approaching death, tends to terrify the most hardened criminals; and to inspire, with a salutary terror, the throng that crowd against the grating of the funeral chapel. Besides, the day of punishment is a day of public mourning; the bells of every parish sound the mournful service of the dead; the culprit is slowly conducted to the scaffold, with gloomy and imposing pomp; his coffin constantly before his eyes; priests walking by his side, chant the prayers of the dead; then comes the religious fraternity, followed by mendicant friars, who ask of the crowd contributions in behalf of the repose of the victim's soul—an appeal to which the crowd never remains deaf.

All this, is undoubtedly frightful; but it is rational and imposing. It shows that a creature of God is not cut off in the midst of life, as a bullock is butchered. It makes the multitude think—who always judge of the crime by the extent of the penalty—that homicide must imply guilt of the deepest stain, since its punishment disturbs a whole city.

This fearful spectacle gives rise to grave reflections, and inspires salutary terror. What there is barbarous in this human sacrifice, is concealed by the terrible majesty of the execution. But what effect can be produced by such preparation for the guillotine as we have described? Early in the morning the culprit is taken from his cell, bound, and thrown into a close carriage; the driver whips his horse, arrives at the scaffold, the knife is set in motion, and the head falls in a basket, in the midst of the revolting sneers and jokes of the most corrupt part of the populace. Where is the fear inspired by this rapid execution? As the execution is almost private, in a place entirely removed, and performed with sly precipitation, the city is ignorant of the bloody and solemn act. No information is given there, that upon this day a man is to be executed. The theatres continue to echo with songs and laughter; the crowd proceed, indifferent to the event. As far as society, humanity and religion are concerned, it is important that judicial homicide should be committed in presence of all. We repeat again, and shall continue to repeat it—here is the knife, but where is the crown? By the side of the penalty exhibit the reward; then only will the lesson be complete and productive. If, on the day succeeding the one on which the populace have seen the blood of a great criminal stain the scaffold, they could see the good man remunerated and exalted, they would as much dread the punishment of the first, as they would be eager to deserve the triumph of the second. Terror seldom prevents crime, and never inspires virtue. As the influence of the penalty of death upon the condemned themselves has been considered, it is either braved with audacious contempt, or they meet it almost senseless and lifeless with fear, or they present their head to the axe with profound and sincere repentance. Consequently, for those who sneer at it, the penalty is insufficient—useless to those who are already morally dead—and too aggravated for those who sincerely repent.

Society kills the murderer, not for the purpose of compelling him to suffer, not on the principle of the *lex talionis;* but it destroys his life to prevent him from doing further injury: it kills him, that the example of his punishment may restrain future murderers.

We believe that the penalty is too barbarous, and does not inspire sufficient terror. We believe that in a few crimes, like parricide, or others of equal enormity, blindness and perpetual confinement in a solitary cell, would sufficiently disarm the culprit, and would punish him in a manner a thousand times more formidable; while giving him, also, an opportunity for repentance.

If the reader doubts this assertion, we could place before him many facts evincing the horror of hardened criminals at solitary confinement. Is it not known, that some of them have committed murder in order to be condemned to death, preferring that penalty to a solitary cell? What would then be their terror, when blindness, combined with solitude, destroyed all hope of escape—a hope which they often cherish, and sometimes realize, even when imprisoned in dungeons and loaded with chains. We think, also, that the abolition of capital punishment will be one of the forced consequences of the penitentiary system. The dread which solitude inspires in the generation which throng our prisons and galleys being so great, that many of those incorrigible men prefer death to being secluded in a cell. It will then be, doubtless, necessary to suppress capital punishment, in order to deprive them of that last and frightful alternative.

CHAPTER XX.....MARTIAL AND CHOURINEUR.

Before continuing our story, we will say a few words upon the relations recently established between Chourineur and Martial.

When Germain had been released from prison, Chourineur easily proved that he had robbed himself. He confessed to the judge the object of this singular transaction; and his freedom was granted, after being justly and severely admonished by the magistrate.

Not having as yet discovered Fleur de Marie, and desiring to recompense this new act of devotion on the part of Chourineur, to whom he was already indebted for his life; Rodolphe, for the purpose of gratifying his new protégé, had lodged him in the hotel of the rue Plumet, promising to attach him to his suite when he returned to Germany. We have stated, that Chourineur evinced for Rodolphe a blind and stubborn attachment, such as a dog evinces for his master. To dwell under the same roof with the Prince, to see him occasionally, and to wait with impatience a new opportunity for making further sacrifices in his behalf, was the very extent of Chourineur's happiness and ambition; for he a thousand times preferred such a condition, to the possession of money, or the farm in Algeria which Rodolphe had placed at his disposal.

But now, that the Prince had found his daughter, his plans were totally changed. Notwithstanding the lively gratitude he felt toward the man who had saved his life, he could not resolve to carry with him to Germany, this witness of Fleur de Marie's first abasement. With a deep desire, however, to grant Chourineur's wishes to the fullest extent, he had him again brought before him, and announced to him that he expected a new proof of his attachment. At these words, the countenance of Chourineur brightened; but it suddenly became clouded with dismay, when he learned from the Prince, not only that he could not be allowed to follow him to Germany, but that he must quit the hotel that very day. It is useless to recount the brilliant remunerations that Rodolphe offered to Chourineur—the money that was destined for him—the deed of the farm in Algeria—indeed, much more if he wished it—the whole was at his disposal. Chourineur, struck to the heart, refused all; and for the first time in his life, perhaps, the man wept. It was only after the most urgent demands of Rodolphe, that he finally consented to accept his first offers.

On the next day, the Prince had Louve and Martial brought to him, and, without making known to them that Fleur de Marie was his daughter, he asked them to state what he could do for them—whatever wish they might have, should be granted. Observing their hesitation, and remembering that Fleur de Marie had spoken of the somewhat wild tastes of Louve and her husband, he proposed to the bold housewife either a large sum of money, or the half of such sum, and a farm in full cultivation, lying adjacent to the one he had purchased for Chourineur; both of them, with their rude and energetic natures, and endowed with good and noble instincts, would sympathize the more readily with each other, since both had cause for seeking solitude; the one on account of her past life—the other on account of the crimes of his family.

The Prince did not deceive himself: Martial and Louve accepted his proposol with evident delight; and, through the intermediation of Murph, being brought in contact with Chourineur, all three felitated themselves upon the relations that their neighboring residence in Algeria promised.

In spite of the deep sadness in which he was plunged, or rather, the cause itself of that sadness, Chourineur, affected by the cordial advances of Martial and his wife, responded with an overflowing heart—a sincere friendship soon united the future colonists. People of this temper judge quickly, and become attached to each other as suddenly. Louve and Martial being unable, notwithstanding their affectionate efforts, to draw their new friend from his gloomy lethargy; now relied solely upon the incidents of the voyage, and the activity of their future life, to distract him from his melancholy; for, once in Algeria, he would be obliged to inform himself as to the method of cultivating the land that had been given to him; the former proprietors, agreeably to the conditions of the sale, being compelled to give it their attention for another year, that the new possessor might be enabled to take proper charge of it at the expiration of that time.

After these preliminary remarks, it will be understood that, informed of the painful interview required of Martial, in obedience to his mother's last request, Chourineur wished to accompany his new friend to the door of Bicêtre, where he waited for him in the hack which conveyed them, and which reconducted them to Paris, after Martial, with frightful feelings, had quitted the dungeon, where the terrible preparations for the execution of his mother and sister were going on.

The countenance of Chourineur had completely changed. The expression of boldness and happiness which ordinarily characterized his masculine face, had given place to a deep melancholy: even his voice had lost its roughness; an affliction of the soul, an affliction till then unknown to him, had bruised and fractured his energetic nature. He looked upon Martial with compassion.

"Courage!" he said to him; "you have done all that a brave man can do. It is over. Think now of your wife, of the children whom you have prevented from becomingcriminal, like their father and mother: this evening we shall leave Paris never to return; and you will never hear mentioned that which afflicts you."

"Notwithstanding, Chourineur, you see, after all, that it is my mother and sister."

"Well, what would you have? So it is; and when things are, we must submit to them," said Chourineur, choking down a sigh.

"After remaining silent an instant, Martial replied to him, cordially—

"I ought to console you also, poor fellow! always so sad."

"Always, Martial."

"Well, I and my wife both expect, that when once out of Paris, it will no longer be so with you."

"Yes," said Chourineur, after reflecting a moment, and shuddering, in spite of himself; "if I leave Paris."

"Why, we leave, this evening?"

"You mean you and your wife—you leave this evening."

"And you, then—have you altered your mind?"

"No."

"What, then?"

"Chourineur was again silent; then answered, with an apparent effort over himself:

"Look, Martial, you will shrug your shoulders, I know, but I wish to tell you everything; if anything happens to me, it will, at least, prove that I am not mistaken."

"What do you mean?"

"When Mr. Rodolphe asked us, if we would like to go to Algeria, and be neighbors there, I did not wish to deceive you—neither you nor your wife—I have told you what I once was——"

"Say nothing more about that; you have already paid for it. You are as good and as brave as any one; but, I suppose that, like myself, you would rather live at a distance, thanks to our generous protector, than remain here, where, however independent and honest we may be, we shall ever be reproached—you for a fault which you have paid for and repented of, and I for the crimes of my parents, for which I am not responsible. But, between us, the past is over, and well over. Do not be uneasy; you can rely upon us, as we can rely upon you."

"Between us, perhaps, the past is all over; but, as I told Mr. Rodolphe, you see, Martial, there is something above—there, and I have killed a man!"

"It is a sad misfortune; but you know, at that moment you was not yourself—you was like a madman; and, besides, you have saved the lives of others, and that should balance it."

"Listen, Martial; if I speak to you of my misfortune, hear why. Formerly I had a dream, frequently, in which I saw the sergeant that I killed; for a long time I was not troubled with this dream, but, last night, I had it!"

"A mere chance."

"No! it announces some misfortune to me, to-day."

"You talk nonsense, my good friend!"

"I have a presentiment that I shall not leave Paris."

"Again, you are wanting in common sense. Your grief at quitting your benefactor, the thought of conducting me to Bicêtre, to-day, where such sad things awaited me, all agitated you during the night; then your dream naturally returned to you."

Chourineur shook his head sadly. "It returns to me just on the eve of Mr. Rodolphe's departure;—for he leaves to-day.

"To-day?"

"Yes; yesterday I sent a person to his hotel, not daring to go myself; he had forbid me. They said, that the Prince would leave this morning, at eleven o'clock, by the way of the barrière of Charenton; as soon as we reach Paris, I shall station myself there, for the purpose of seeing him for the last time—the last!"

"He appeared so kind, that I understand why you like him."

"Like him!" said Chourineur, with deep and concentrated emotion. "Ah! yes, indeed! I would be willing, Martial, to sleep upon the ground, to eat black bread, be his dog, anything, to be where he is. I ask nothing more. It was too much, he did not wish it."

"He has been so generous to you."

"That is not the reason why I like him so much; it is because he told me I had a heart and honor; yes, at a time, too, when I was savage as a beast; when I looked upon myself as the vilest of the vile, he made me understand that there was

something good in me. Yet, when my punishment was over, I repented; and after suffering misery upon misery, without stealing, I worked with courage to gain an honest living, without wishing to harm any one—although everybody regarded me as a perfect brigand; which was by no means encouraging."

"It is true, often to maintain yourself, or keep you in a good path, only a few words of encouragement are necessary."

"Just so, Martial; and when Mr. Rodolphe said those words to me, faith, they made my heart beat strong and proud! Since then, I would leap into the fire to do good. Let an opportunity come, you will see! And for that, thanks to who! thanks to Mr. Rodolphe!"

"It is exactly because you are a thousand times better than you were, that you ought to have no bad presentiments. Your dream amounts to nothing."

"Well: we shall see. It is not that I seek some misfortune purposely—there can be none greater than that which has happened—to see Mr. Rodolphe no more, believing, as I did, that I should never quit him again. After my own way, of course, I should have ever been ready to serve him, body and soul. Never mind! Perhaps he is wrong. After all, Martial, I am but a worm of the earth by the side of him. Yet it sometimes happens that the smallest can be useful to the greatest. If such should be the case, I shall never in my life forgive him, for depriving himself of me."

"Who knows? Perhaps you will see him again some day."

"Oh, no! he said to me, 'My good fellow, you must promise me, never to attempt to see me again; that will be doing me a service.' You know, Martial, I made the promise. And on the honor of a man, I will keep it! But it is hard."

"Once down there, by degrees, you will forget your grief. We will work; we will live contented and alone, like good farmers, except sometimes, we will have a few shots with the fusil at the Arabs; and so much the better, for that will suit both my wife and myself. Oh! she's a mad-cap! that Louve!"

"As to the fusil, Martial, there I'm at home," said Chourineur, becoming less sad. "I am a bachelor, and have been a soldier."

"And I a poacher."

"But as to you, you have a wife and two children, to whom you are like a father. I—I have only my skin; and since it can no longer be a shield to Mr. Rodolphe, I care but little for it. So you see, if there is any fighting to be done, I'm the one concerned."

"That concerns both of us."

"No, only me; thunder and Mars! give me the Bedouins."

"Well, I would rather hear you talk so, than as you did just now. Come Chourineur, we will be real brothers; and you may entertain us with your sorrows, if they last, for I have mine also. To-day's journey I shall remember for a long time in my life; a mother and sister cannot be seen, as I have seen mine, and be forgotten. You and I are alike in too many things, not to go well together. We neither of us turn up our noses at danger; so, we will be half farmers and half soldiers. There is hunting also down there; we will hunt; if you wish to live entirely alone, you can do so, and we will be your neighbors; if not, we will all live together. We will bring up the children like brave folks; and you will be almost their uncle; and we will be brothers. Does that please you?" said Martial, extending his hand to Chourineur.

"It does, my brave Martial; and more than that, sorrow shall kill me, or I will kill it, as they say."

"It will not kill you. We will keep watch down in our desert, and every evening we will say, '*Brother, thanks to Mr. Rodolphe;*' that will be our prayer for him."

"Hold, Martial; what you say is a balm to my soul."

"Well, that cursed dream! you will never think of it again, I hope."

"I will try."

"Very well, then, you will come after us at four o'clock? The diligence leaves at five."

"All right; but here we are almost in Paris. I will stop the hack, and go a-foot to the barrière of Charenton. I will wait there to see Mr. Rodolphe pass."

The coach stopped and Chourineur descended.

"Do not forget; at four o'clock, my good comrade!" said Martial.

"At four o'clock."

Chourineur had forgotten that it was the day of the carnival, and he was much surprised at the spectacle, at once old and frightful, that presented itself to his sight, as he passed over a part of the outer boulevard, which he had taken for the purpose of reaching the barrière of Charenton.

CHAPTER XXI. THE FINGER OF GOD

Chourineur in a few moments was hurried along, in spite of himself, by a compact crowd, a stream of populace, who were descending from the low taverns of the faubourg of the Glaciere, and crowding toward the entrance of that barrière, with the view of scattering themselves upon the boulevard Saint Jacques, where the execution was about to take place. Although it was broad day, the resounding music of the orchestra of the towers, and above all, the sonorous vibrating of the *cornets à pistons* were heard in the distance.

The pencil of Callot, of Rembrandt, or of Goya, is required to convey an idea of the strange, hideous, and almost fantastical appearance of this multitude. Almost all,—men, women, and children—were clad in old masquerading costumes; those who could not obtain such a luxury, wore upon their garments rags of flashing colors; a few of the more youthful were wrapped in female frocks, torn and soiled by mud; the faces of all branded by debauchery and vice, and hardened by intoxication, brightened with savage joy at the thought, that after a night of intemperate dissipation, they would have an opportunity of witnessing the death of two women, for whom the scaffold was already prepared.* There were assembled the base and filthy scum of the population of Paris, that immense cohort composed of bandits and abandoned women, who earn, by crime, their daily bread, and who, well fed, return nightly to their dens.†

The outer boulevard being very narrow at this spot, the crowd was so dense and compact as to absolutely check the circulation. Notwithstanding his athletic strength, Chourineur was obliged to remain immovable in the midst of it. He resigned himself to his position. The Prince would leave the rue Plumet at ten o'clock, he had been told, and therefore would not pass the barrière de Charenton before eleven; it was not yet seven o'clock. Although he had but lately been compelled to associate with the degraded classes of this populace, Chourineur, on finding himself again among them, experienced an unconquerable disgust,—urged on by the pressure of the immense throng to the wall of one of the grog-shops, that swarm on the boulevards, through the open windows of which escaped the stunning sounds of an orchestra of brass instruments, he became the unwilling witness of a strange spectacle. In a vast lower hall, occupied at one extremity by the musicians, and surrounded by benches and tables covered by the remnants of a repast, by broken plates and overturned bottles, a dozen men and women in disguise, and in a state of intoxication, were surrendering themselves with frantic passion to that wild and obscene dance called the *chahut*, in which a small number of the habitual patrons of these places took no part until at the end of the ball when the municipal guards on duty had retired. Among the dissolute couples who figured in this saturnalian festival, Chourineur observed two who received applause over all others, owing to the revolting audacity of their attitudes, their gestures and their words. The first couple was composed of a man and woman; the former was partially disguised as a bear, by means of a vest and pantaloons made of black sheep-skin. In the place of the head of the animal, which was probably too troublesome to carry, was substituted a kind of cowl, of long hair, which entirely covered the face; two holes at the light of the eyes, and a large slit before the mouth, allowed the wearer to breathe, to see and to speak. The man thus masked, was one of the prisoners who escaped from La Force, among whom were Barbillon and the two murderers who were arrested at the *tapis-franc* of the ogress at the commencement of this story. This man was Nicholas Martial, the son and brother of the two women for whom the scaffold was prepared at the distance of a few steps. Urged into this act of atrocious insensibility and audacious boldness, by one of his companions, a dreaded bandit, who had also escaped and was disguised,—this wretch dared, with the aid of this transformation, to enter into the last pleasures of the carnival.

The woman who danced with him was dressed as a sutler; she wore a round-topped leather hat, trimmed with torn ribbons; a kind of vest of faded red, ornamented with three rows of brass buttons, like a hussar's; a green petticoat, and white calico pantaloons; her black hair fell in disorder over her forehead; her ghastly and livid features were stamped by boldness and impudence.

Opposite to these dancers was one not less depraved. He was a tall man, disguised as Robert Macaire; he had so besmeared his bony face with soot, as not to be recognized; besides which, a broad bandage covered his left eye, and the white globe of the right eye, contrasting with his black face, rendered it still more hideous. The lower part of Squelettes face, (for he has undoubt-

* The execution of Norbert and Desprès took place the day after the Carnival.

† According to M. Frégier, that excellent historian of the dangerous classes of society; there are in Paris about thirty-thousand persons, who exist solely by theft.

edly been recognized already,) disappeared in a high cravat, made of an old red shawl. His head covered by a gray, worn-out, thread-bare and crownless hat; clad in a ragged green coat, pantaloons patched in a thousand places, and tied round the ankles with twine, this assassin assumed the most immodest and grotesque postures of the *chahut;* he was darting right and left, backward and forward, folding and unfolding his long limbs as hard as iron, with so much vigor and elasticity, that they resembled steel springs in motion.

His female partner in the dance—a worthy coryphæus of these degrading orgies—a tall and nimble creature, with an impudent and bacchanalian countenance, was dressed as a stevedore, her head covered by a powdered wig, surmounted by a military cap, from beneath which a large cue was seen, and wearing a vest and pantaloons of green velvet, with an orange scarf tied round her body, and its long ends floating behind her back. A large, masculine and vile looking woman—the ogress of the tapis-franc—seated upon one of the benches, held upon her knees the tartan cloak of this creature, and that of the sutler, while they were endeavoring to rival Squelette and Nicholas Martial, by their loose attitudes and motions.

Among the other dancers, was discovered a young cripple, representing the devil in his dress, by means of a black knit shirt, which was much too large for him; red drawers, and a horrible grinning mask of a green color. In spite of his deformity, the little monster possessed surprising agility; his precocious depravity reached, if it did not surpass, that of his frightful companions; he frisked about with as much freedom as any of them, before a fat woman, who was disguised as a shepherdess, and who excited his immodest gambols, by her excessive bursts of laughter.

No accusation being brought against Tortillard, (he has also been recognized,) Bras-rouge having been temporarily retained in prison, the youth, at the request of his father, had been claimed by Micou—the receiver of stolen goods of the *passage* of the Brasserie, who had not been informed against by his accomplices.

To obtain an idea of the secondary characters in the scene which we are endeavoring to paint, imagine everything that is most vile, shameless, and monstrous in this rapacious, sanguinary, audacious and atheistical bacchanal, which showed itself more and more hostile to social order, and to which we have desired to draw the attention of the reflecting in terminating this recital. Can this last horrible exhibition symbolize the imminent peril which incessantly threatens society? Yes! let us reflect that this unity and increase of a race of thieves and murderers, is a living protest against repressive laws; and above all, against the *preventive measures of a fore-seeing legislation* and of *vast preservative institutions*, destined to watch over and protect, from their infancy, the morals of these unhappy and abandoned creatures, who have been led astray by examples of the most frightful character. Again, these disinherited beings, whom God has made neither better nor worse than his other creatures, would not fester thus incurably, but in the mire of misery, ignorance and beastliness, through which they are dragged from their birth.

Still more excited by the laughter and applause of the crowd that pressed against the windows, the actors in these abominable orgies that we are describing, cried out to the orchestra to play a last galop. The musicians, delighted at the idea of ending a setting so painful to their lungs, yielded to the general wish, and played most energetically a galoping air of a hurried and rapid measure. As the vibrating harmony of the brass instruments became louder, the excitement redoubled; all the dancers crowded together, and following Squelette and his partner, commenced whirling round, and giving utterance to the most savage howlings. A thick dust, created by the furious stamping, rose from the flooring of the room, and cast a sort of reddish and peculiar cloud upon this vortex of entangled men and women, who were revolving with a dizzy rapidity. Excited by wine, by their own cries and movements; it was no longer intoxication only, it became frenzy and delirium; they required more room, and Squelette cried out in a panting voice:

"Clear the way by the door there; we are going out upon the boulevard."

"Yes, yes;" cried the crowd heaped up against the windows, "a galop to the barrière Saint Jacques."

"It will soon be time for chopping the two women."

"How droll it is! the executioner will kill two birds at once."

"With the *cornet à piston* as an accompaniment."

"We 'll dance the contre dance of the guillotine."

"The woman without a head, lead the way," cried Tortillard.

"That will make the victims feel merry."

"I will take the widow for a partner."

"I the daughter."

"That will put old Jack Ketch in good spirits."

"He will dance the *chahut* upon his shop with his apprentices."

"Death to honest folks! Hurrah! for thieves and assassins!" cried Squelette, in a roaring voice.

These jests and menaces, accompanied by obscene songs, cries and shoutings, had terribly increased by the time Squelette and his band had opened for themselves, by their impetuous and headlong violence, a large space in the centre of the compact crowd. The mêlée then became frightful; the howlings, imprecations and boisterous laughter, appeared no longer human. The tumult was suddenly increased by a new incident: the carriage in which the condemned were inclosed, with its escort of cavalry, was discovered in the distance, at the angle of the boulevard, and the whole of this populace rushed in that direction, uttering cries of ferocious satisfaction. At the same moment the crowd was overtaken by a courier, coming from the boulevard of the *Invalids*, and galloping toward the barrière of Charenton. He was clad in a light-blue vest, the seams of which were heavily laced with silver; but as a sign of mourning, he wore black pantaloons under his high-topped boots; his cap, also laced with silver, had round it a bandage of crape; upon the blinds of the bridle were seen in relief the royal arms of Gerolstein. The courier put his horse upon a walk; but his progress becoming more and more embarrassed, he was obliged to stop when he found himself in the midst of the crowd of which we have spoken. Although he cried out to the throng to clear the way, and guided his horse with the utmost precaution, shouts and threats were soon uttered against him.

"Does the fellow want to mount upon our backs with his camel?"

"What a quantity of trinkets he is covered with!" cried Tortillard, from under his green mask.

"If he troubles us, let's pull him off!"

"And cut off the tackle on his vest, and melt it!" cried Nicholas.

"You will be ripped open, if you are not quiet, you ugly rascal!" added Squelette, to the courier, seizing his bridle: for the crowd had become so dense that the bandit had given up his project of dancing to the barrière.

The courier, a vigorous and resolute man, raised the handle of his whip, and said to Squelette:

"If you do not let go my horse's bridle, I will cut your face."

"You! you villain?"

"Yes; my horse was walking; I cried, clear the way; you have no right to stop me. My lord's carriage is behind me; I already hear the whips; let me pass."

"Your lord?" said Squelette, "what is he to me? I will put an end to him, if I please; I have never killed a lord, and I have a great mind to do it now!"

"There is no longer any lords. *Vive la Charte!*" cried Tortillard, humming those verses, "Forward, let us march against their cannons," and suddenly clinging to one of the courier's boots, with all his weight, he made him stagger in his saddle. A severe blow from the handle of the whip, upon the head of the young cripple, punished his audacity. Immediately the mob, enraged, rushed upon the courier. It was in vain that he dug his spurs into his horse's side, for the purpose of urging him forward, and disengaging himself; he could only succeed in drawing his hunting knife. Dismounted, and struck down in the midst of the furious cries and howls of his assailants, he would have been killed upon the spot, if the arrival of Rodolphe's carriage had not diverted their brutal rage.

For some moments the four post-horses, harnessed to the Prince's carriage, had been walking; one of the two footmen, who were in mourning, (on account of Sarah's death,) had prudently descended from the back seat, and was holding one of the doors of the vehicle, which was very low. The postillions, while admonishing the crowd to clear the way, were advancing with precaution.

Rodolphe was dressed in deep mourning, as also his daughter, one of whose hands he held within his own, while regarding her with a look of affectionate tenderness. The sweet and charming face of Fleur de Marie was encased in a small riding-hood of black crape, which gave additional effect to the soft whiteness of her complexion, and the brilliant gloss of her auburn hair; it seemed as though the azure of the clear sky was reflected from her large eyes, their color was of such a mild and limpid blue. Although a sweet smile upon her face expressed calmness and happiness, when she gazed upon her father; a slight shade of melancholy, and sometimes even of unaccountable sadness, cast their gloom over the features of Fleur de Marie, when the eyes of her father were withdrawn from her.

"You regret that I compelled you to rise so early, and hastened the hour of our departure," said Rodolphe to her, smiling.

"Oh no, father, this morning is so beautiful."

"I thought that our journey would be better divided in leaving at an early hour, and that you would be less fatigued. Murph, my aid-de-camp, and the carriage which contains your women, will overtake us at our first halting-place, where we shall repose."

"Kind father; it is I—I ever, who occupy your thoughts."

"Yes, Mademoiselle, and without reproach, it is impossible for me to indulge in any other thought," said the Prince with a smile; then adding with a burst of tenderness—"Oh! I love you so much, I love you so much; quick, your forehead."

Fleur de Marie leaned toward her father, who pressed his lips with delight upon her lovely brow.

It was at this moment that the carriage approached the crowd, and commenced advancing slowly. Rodolphe, astonished, lowered the glass, and said in German to the footman, who was standing near the door—

"Well, Frantz, what is the matter? what is the tumult?"

"My lord, there is such a crowd that the horses can no longer proceed."

"And what is the cause of the crowd?"

"My lord."

"Well!"

"It is your Highness——"

"Speak on."

"My lord, I just heard say that there is to be an execution yonder.

"It is frightful, indeed!" cried Rodolphe, throwing himself back into one corner of the carriage.

"What is the matter with you, my father?" said Fleur de Marie, with earnest anxiety.

"Nothing, nothing, my child."

"But these threatening cries; do you hear them? they approach; what does it all mean?"

"Frantz, order the postillion to return, and reach Charenton by another route, it matters not which," said Rodolphe.

"It is too late, my lord; we are in the midst of the crowd; they have stopped the horses; they are bad-looking men."

The footman could say no more. The *mob*, excited by the sanguinary bravadoes of Squelette and Nicholas, all at once surrounded the carriage. Notwithstanding the exertions and the threats of the postillions, the horses were stopped; and Rodolphe discovered, on all sides, and level with the doors, nought but savage, furious, and menacing countenances; and, towering above all, the tall figure of Squelette, who was advancing toward the door.

"Take care, my father!" cried Fleur de Marie, throwing her arm around Rodolphe's neck.

"It is then you, who are the lord?" said Squelette, thrusting his hideous head even into the carriage.

At this insolence, Rodolphe, had it not been for his daughter's presence, would have given way to his natural impetuosity of character; but he restrained himself, and answered calmly,

"What do you wish? Why do you stop my carriage?"

"Because we please," said Squelette, placing his bony hands upon the edge of the door. "Each one in his turn; yesterday you trampled upon the mob; to-day, the mob will trample upon you, if you stir."

"We are lost, father!" murmured Fleur de Marie, in a low voice.

"Do not be uneasy; I understand it," said the Prince, "it is the last day of the Carnival. These men are intoxicated; I will get rid of them."

"We must make him get out, and his woman also," cried Nicholas. "Why do they trample on the poor?"

"You appear already to have drank much, and to wish to drink more," said Rodolphe, drawing his purse from his pocket. "Here's this for you; do not stop my carriage any longer;" and gave his purse a toss.

Tortillard caught it, flying.

"Come; you are about travelling; your pockets must be crammed; shell out more money, or I will kill you. I have nothing to risk; I demand your purse or your life, in open day," said Squelette, completely intoxicated by wine and furious rage, and at the same time, opening the carriage-door suddenly.

The patience of Rodolphe was at an end; anxious for Fleur de Marie, whose fright increased every moment, and presuming that a vigorous movement would impose upon the wretch, whom he believed to be only drunk; he leaped from the carriage for the purpose of seizing Squelette by the throat. The latter first drew himself back suddenly, then snatching from his pocket a long dirk, he threw himself upon Rodolphe. Fleur de Marie, seeing the dagger raised against her father, uttered a painful scream, and leaped from the carriage into his arms. It would have been a fatal moment for her and her father, had not Chourineur—who at the commencement of the fray recognized the livery of the Prince—succeeded, by super-human efforts, in reaching Squelette. At the moment when the latter raised his dirk against the Prince, Chourineur arrested the arm of the brigand with one hand, and with the other he seized him by the collar, and half-overturned him backward. Although surprised at the unexpected movement, Squelette recovered himself, and recognizing Chourineur, he cried out,

"The gray blouse man of La Force! This time I will finish you," and precipitating himself with fury upon Chourineur, he plunged the dagger into his breast.

Chourineur tottered, but did not fall: the crowd sustained him.

"The guard—there's the guard!" cried many voices in alarm.

At these words—at the sight of the murder of Chourineur, the whole of the compact crowd, fearing that they might be compromised by the assassination, dispersed as if by enchantment, and fled in every direction. Squelette, Nicholas, Martial and Tortillard, disappeared also.

When the guard arrived, guided by the courier, who succeeded in escaping when the mob abandoned him for the purpose of surrounding the Prince's carriage, there remained, left on this melancholy scene, Rodolphe, his daughter, and Chourineur, weltering in his own blood. The two footmen were seated upon the ground with their backs against a tree.

All this passed a thousand times more rapidly than it is possible to relate it, at a few steps from the tavern from whence Squelette and his gang rushed forth.

The Prince, pale and agitated, folded the fainting Fleur de Marie in his arms, while the postillions repaired the harness which had been partially broken in the scuffle.

"Be quick," said the prince to his men, who were engaged in assisting Chourineur. "Carry the unfortunate man into the tavern. And you," he added, addressing the courier, "leap upon the seat, and proceed at full gallop to the hotel after doctor David; he was not to leave until after eleven o'clock: he will be found there."

A few moments afterward, the horses left at full speed, and the two domestics carried Chourineur into the lower hall—the place of the late orgies—and where were still found some of the females who had participated in them.

"My poor child," said Rodolphe, to his daughter, "I will conduct you to a chamber in this house, and you will await me there, for I cannot abandon to the sole care of my servants that brave man who has just saved my life a second time."

"Oh father! pray do not leave me," cried Fleur de Marie, seizing the arm of Rodolphe; "do not leave me alone, I should die of fright: I will accompany you wherever you go."

"But this frightful scene!"

"Thanks to that man, you yet live father; permit me at least to join you, that I may thank him and console him."

The Prince was in a state of great perplexity; his daughter had evinced so much fear at being left alone in a room of this vile tavern, that he concluded to enter with her into the lower hall, where Chourineur had been conducted. The master of the tavern, assisted by several women, who were still remaining there—among whom was the ogress of the *tapis-franc*—had hastily laid the wounded man upon a mattress, and stanched his wound with napkins.

Chourineur opened his eyes, at the moment Rodolphe entered. At the sight of the Prince, his features, of a deadly paleness, revived; he smiled painfully, and said, in a low voice:

"Ah! Mr. Rodolphe, how happy a circumstance it was, that I happened to be present."

"As brave, and devoted as ever!" said the Prince, in a desponding tone—"again you have saved me!"

"I was about to go to the barrière of Charenton, for the purpose of taking a parting look of you; happily, I found myself stopped here by the crowd; besides, it must have happened. I told Martial, I had a presentiment."

"A presentiment!"

"Yes, Mr. Rodolphe; the dream of the sergeant; that night I had ——"

"Banish such thoughts; have hope; your wound will not prove mortal."

"Oh, yes! Squelette has struck sure. Never mind, I was right. I told Martial that a worm of the earth, like me, could sometimes be useful to a great lord, like you."

"But, it is my life! my life! that I again owe to you."

"We are quits, Mr. Rodolphe. You told me that I had a heart and honor. Those words, you see—Oh!—I am suffocating—my lord—without you—command—do me the honor—to—take me by the hand—I feel that I am going."

"No, it is impossible!" cried the Prince, leaning over Chourineur, and pressing the icy hand of the dying man in his own. "No: you will live! you will live!"

"Mr. Rodolphe,—you see there is something—above—I have killed—with a blow of the knife," said Chourineur, in a stifled voice, that was growing weaker and weaker.

At this moment, Fleur de Marie, whom he had not before perceived, attracted his gaze. Astonishment was depicted upon his countenance; he made a movement, and said:

"Ah!—my God!—Goualeuse."

"Yes!—she is my daughter!—she blesses you! for having preserved her father's life."

"She—your daughter!—here—that reminds me of our first acquaintance, Mr. Rodolphe—and those finishing blows—with the fist—but—that blow with the knife—will also be—the finishing blow—I have stabbed—stabbed—it is right."

He then drew a deep sigh, and threw his head backward. He was dead.

The noise of horses was heard without. The carriage of Rodolphe had met that of Murph and David, who, in their anxiety to join the Prince, had hastened their departure.

David and the Squire entered.

"David," said Rodolphe, drying his tears, and pointing to Chourineur—"Is there no hope left?—my God!"

"None, my lord," answered the doctor, after a moment's examination.

During that moment, a frightful and silent scene had passed, between Fleur de Marie and the ogress; whom, as yet, Rodolphe had not observed.

When Chourineur pronounced, in an under tone, the name of Goualeuse, the ogress, raising her head quickly, saw Fleur de Marie. The horrible woman had already recognized Rodolphe;—they called him my lord; he called Goualeuse his daughter. Such a sudden metamorphose, filled the ogress with amazement. She steadily fastened her eyes, in stupid bewilderment, upon her former victim.

Fleur de Marie, pale, and alarmed, seemed fascinated by her gaze. The death of Chourineur, the unexpected appearance of the ogress, had just awakened, more painfully than ever, the remembrance of her first degradation, and it appeared to her an ominous foreboding.

From that moment, Fleur de Marie was struck by one of those presentiments, which often occasions upon characters, such as her own, an irresistible influence.

In a short time after these sad events, Rodolphe and his daughter left Paris for ever.

END OF PART THE EIGHTH.

PART THE NINTH AND LAST.

EPILOGUE—GEROLSTEIN.

CHAPTER I.

LETTER FROM PRINCE HENRY D'HERKAUSEN OLDENZAAL TO THE COUNT MAXIMILIAN KAMINETZ.

OLDENZAAL, August 25th, 1840.

I ARRIVED at this place from Gerolstein, where I have been spending three months in the society of the Grand Duke and his family. I expected to find here a letter from yourself, my dear Maximilian; and you can imagine my surprise and disappointment when I learned that you will still be detained for several weeks in Hungary. I have been unable to write to you during the last four months, from my ignorance of your address, thanks to your original and adventurous way of travelling. You promised, however, when we parted at Vienna, that you would meet me at Oldenzaal on the first of August. I must, therefore, relinquish the pleasure of seeing you, and yet I never in my life was so anxious to pour my heart into yours, my dearest and oldest friend; for, although we are very young, our friendship dates from our infancy. How shall I inform you of the complete change which the last three months have produced in me? It has been one of those periods which determine the whole future existence of a man. Judge if your presence and council is not indispensable. I know that in this emergency no necessity can be so imperious, no interest so important as to detain you from me; you will come to me, you will come to me, I am convinced, my dear Maximilian, for I cannot come to you. My father's very precarious health recalled me from Gerolstein, and, as it daily becomes more feeble, it will be impossible for me to leave him. I have so much to relate that I fear I shall become prolix, for I have to write the most eventful as well as the most important epoch of my life. By a singular and lamentable accident we have been separated from each other during this period—*we*, the inseparable, the brothers, the evangelists of a thrice-holy friendship—we who are so gratified in affording to the world in our own persons a proof that the Carlos and Posa of our Schiller are not ideal beings, but that we, like the immortal creations of the divine poet, are capable of experiencing the delights of a tender and reciprocal friendship. My friend, my friend, why were you not by my side? For the last three months my heart has overflowed with mingled emotions of rapture and indescribable sadness; and I was alone—I still am alone. I am sure of your pity, for you know the acuteness of my susceptibility—you have seen my eyes fill with tears at the artless recital of a noble action, at the simple beauty of a fine sunset, at the peaceful and serene repose of a starlit eve of summer. Do you remember, during our excursion last year to the ruins of Oppenfeld, our delightful revery on the banks of the vast lake, on that night of unequalled beauty and romance? The evening to which I allude, was in strange contrast with the bloody duel which took place three days afterward, when I refused your services as my second, for fear of the suffering I should endure on your account, if I happened to be wounded in your presence—the duel in which my second slew that young Frenchman, the Viscount Saint Remy—the whole of it growing out of a gambling dispute. By the way, what has become of that dangerous siren whom the Viscount brought to Oppenfeld, who was called, I believe, Cecile David? I anticipate your smile at the manner in which I wander among the reminiscences of the past, instead of approaching the serious confidence which I promised to impart. The reason is, that I shrink from disclosing it: I am well acquainted with your severity, and dread your rebukes—yes, rebukes—because, instead of acting with reflection and discretion—the discretion of a youth of twenty-one! I have acted foolishly, or rather, I have not acted at all; I quietly surrendered myself to the stream, and allowed it to carry me away; and it is only since I returned from Gerolstein that I have, as it were, woke up from the delightful trance in which for the last three months I have been lulled. The wakening has nearly killed me! Well, my kind friend, my good Maximilain, I arm myself *with all my courage* to begin; I beg you will hearken to me with indulgence. I commence with my eyes cast down, for I discern the severity of thy features—thou cynic!

Having obtained leave of absence for six months, I left Vienna, and sojourned here for some time with my father; and, his health being comparatively comfortable, he advised me to pay a visit to my excellent aunt, the princess Julianne, the Superior of the Convent of Gerolstein. I believe that I have already told you, my friend, that my grandmother was a first cousin of the Grand Duke's grandfather, and that his Highness has always treated myself and my father as his most affectionate cousins. You are also aware, probably, that, during the long visit which the Prince made to France, he intrusted my father with the government of the dukedom. I do not mention these circumstances in the spirit of vanity, but to explain to you the intimate terms on which I lived with the Grand Duke's family during my sojourn at Gerolstein. Do you remember, that, while we were travelling on the banks of the Rhine, we heard that the Prince had met in France the Countess Sarah McGregor, and had married her *in extremis*, in order to legitimate the daughter which she bore him during their secret union, which was null on account of its informality, and its being contracted contrary to the wishes of the Grand Duke then reigning? The child thus solemnly acknowledged is the Princess Amelia,* of whom Lord Dudley, who had seen her at Gerolstein, spoke to us at Vienna in such a strain of enthusiastic compliment, which we regarded as so exaggerated. Who could have foretold, then, the events which have since occurred? I suppose that you already suspect my secret; but I will follow the order of my narrative, without anticipating the sequel. The convent of Saint Hermangilde, of which my aunt is the Superior, is scarcely the eighth of a league from Gerolstein; the gardens of the convent stretch even to the gates of the city. A delightful mansion, distinct from the convent, was placed at my disposal by my aunt, who loves me with maternal tenderness. She informed me, that, on the day after my arrival, there was to be an audience and a fete, in consequence of the public and official announcement made by the Grand Duke, of his intended marriage with the Marchioness d'Harville, who, a short time before, had arrived at Gerolstein in company with her father, the Count d'Orbigny.† Many people blamed the Prince for not having again sought a royal alliance; his last wife was a

* The name of Fleur de Marie was connected, in the mind both of Rodolphe and his daughter, with so many painful recollections, that the name of Amelia was given to her, which was one of the names of the Grand Duke's mother

† To sustain the probability of our story, we must remind the reader that the last sovereign Princess of Courland was Mademoiselle Medeur, a lady no less remarkable for the rare superiority of her intellect, than for the charms of her character and the excellence of her heart.

daughter of the house of Bavaria; but there were others, in which number my aunt was included, who were pleased that he had sacrificed ambitious forms to his adoration of a young and amiable lady, allied to the most distinguished nobility of France. You know, also, that my aunt has always professed the greatest devotion to the Grand Duke; for no one is more capable than herself, of appreciating the eminent qualities of the Prince.

"My dear child," said she, "the most gratifying sight which you will see at the audience, will be, beyond all comparison, the pearl of Gerolstein."

"To whom do you allude, my good aunt?"

"To the Princess Amelia."

"The daughter of the Grand Duke! I remember of hearing at Vienna, Lord Dudley speak of her in strains which we regarded as poetical."

"At my age, and with the character which I sustain, and the situation which I occupy, one is but little apt to be overcome with enthusiasm, you may rely on the calmness and impartiality of my opinion; and I assure you that I never knew a being more lovely and enchanting than the Princess Amelia. I should speak of her transcendent beauty, were she not endowed with charms superior to the loveliness even of her person—artlessness and dignity, grace and modesty, inseparably blended. From the first day of my introduction to her, I have been drawn toward the young Princess by an involuntary sympathy. Nor am I alone. The Archduchess Sophia has been at Gerolstein for several days; she is the most proud and haughty Princess that I ever knew."

"It is true. I am well acquainted with her keen and ironical temper; few people can endure its bitterness; she was avoided at Vienna, like the fire. Has the Princess found grace in her eyes?"

"The other day, she came here, after having visited the asylum which is under the protection of the young Princess. 'Do you know one thing?' said this dreaded Archduchess to me; 'I have a mind that is somewhat inclined to satire—have I not? Well; I am convinced, that, if I lived long with the daughter of the Grand Duke, I should become perfectly harmless: her excellence is contagious.'"

"This cousin of mine seems to be a perfect enchantress," said I to my aunt, smiling.

"Her most attractive quality, in my estimation, is the inseparable blending of the dignity of a Princess with the modesty and amiability of an unpretending female, and which gives to the surpassing loveliness of her face, so serene and benignant an expression."

"The modesty of which you speak, my aunt, is certainly a very rare attribute with a Princess so young, so beautiful, and so fortunate."

"You must reflect, that what increases the merit of the rare humility of the Princess, is, that her elevation to the distinguished position to which she is entitled, is very recent."*

"In her conversation with you, my aunt, has the Princess made any allusion to her past history?"

"No; but, when a woman of my advanced years addressed her in the language of respect to which the daughter of my sovereign is entitled, her modest, dignified, and ingenuous reserve, mingled with gratitude and veneration, abundantly proved to me that she did not forget the past, in the distinguished position which she now occupied; and that she yielded to my age, the same tribute which I paid to her rank."

"Indeed," replied I to my aunt, "very nice tact must be necessary to observe these delicate shades of character."

"The more frequently I have seen the Princess, the stronger my convictions have become, that my first impressions in regard to her character, were correct. Her charities and good works, since her arrival here, are almost incredible, and exceedingly interesting in a young woman of her age, especially as they display so much reflection and judgment. At her request, the Grand Duke has founded an asylum for young orphan girls of from five to six years old, and also for those of the same class who have reached their sixteenth year—an age so fatal to those who are exposed, at the same time, to temptation and want. The superintendents of this institution are nuns of my convent, descended from noble families. In my visits to this asylum, I have frequently had occasion to observe the almost idolatry of the poor disinherited creatures for the Princess Amelia. She devotes a few hours every day to this establishment, which has been placed under her special protection; and the inmates and nuns not only regard the Princess with respect and gratitude, as I have before said to you, but they almost worship her as a saint."

"Your Princess seems, indeed, to be an angel, my dear aunt."

"Yes, an angel," she replied; "it is impossible for you to conceive of the touching kindness with which she treats her protegés. With what pious solicitude she watches over them! I never saw any one who was so skilful in administering relief to the unfortunate, without wounding their susceptibility. One would think that she was drawn toward this particular class of females, by some secret sympathy; and would you believe it?—although the daughter of a sovereign, she calls these girls by no other name than sister!"

I must confess to you, Maximilian, that, at these last words of my aunt, I could not restrain a tear. Do you not regard her conduct as touching and holy in the extreme? You know my sincerity, and I assure you that I repeat, word for word, the statements of my aunt.

"Since the Princess," said I, "is so eminently endowed, I shall be greatly confused when I am presented to her to-morrow. You know my diffidence, and you are also aware, that devotion of character has much more influence upon me than rank; and I am convinced that I shall appear to the Princess most stupid and embarrassed."

"Come, come, be comforted, my child," said my aunt, smiling; "the Princess will have pity upon you. Besides, you will not be to her a new acquaintance."

"What! I! my aunt?"

"Certainly."

"How can that be?"

"You remember that, at the age of sixteen years, when you left Oldenzaal, to travel in Russia and in England, with your father, I had your portrait taken in the dress which you wore in the first dress-ball that the Grand Duchess gave."

"Yes, my aunt; the dress of a German page of the sixteenth century."

"Our excellent artist, Fritz Mokker, while delineating your features faithfully, not only reproduced a personage of the 16th century, but by a caprice of art imitated the style and the dress of the portraits of that epoch. A few days after her arrival in Germany, the Princess Amelia, having called upon me, with her father, observed your portrait, and asked me, with great earnestness, 'Whose was that charming face, of olden time?' Her father made me a sign, and replied, 'That is the portrait of one of my cousins, who would now be, as you will observe by his costume, three hundred years old; but who, although still young, has given proofs of rare courage and excellence of heart. Is not intrepidity stamped upon his features, and is there not kindness in his smile?'"

(I beg of you, Maximilian, not to shrug up your shoulders in contempt, because I write such trifles concerning myself. You know that it is disagreeable to me; but the sequel of the narrative will show that these details, which, I am conscious, may appear ridiculous, are in fact essential. I will, therefore, bring this parenthesis to a conclusion, and proceed.)

"The Princess Amelia," continued my aunt, "duped by the innocent jest, coincided with her father's opinion as to the mild and daring expression of your countenance, after having given the portrait a closer scrutiny. When I went to see her at Gerolstein, afterward, she asked me, smiling, what news I brought from my cousin of olden time? I then confessed our deception, and said that the handsome page of the sixteenth century was only my nephew, the Prince Henry d'Herkausen Oldenzaal, now twenty-one years of age, Captain of the Guards in the service of his Majesty, the emperor of Austria, and in every respect, with the exception of the costume, very much like the portrait. At these words," said my aunt, "the Princess blushed, became thoughtful, as she almost invariably is, and has since made no inquiries of me about the portrait. You see, therefore, my child, that your face will not be an entirely new one to your cousin, as the Grand Duke calls you. I hope you will recover your confidence, and not dishonor your portrait," said my aunt, smiling.

This conversation took place, as I have already informed you, Maximilian, the day before I was to be presented to my cousin, the Princess. I left my aunt and returned to my own lodgings.

As I have never concealed from you any of my thoughts, good or bad, I will confess to you the foolish and absurd imaginations to which I surrendered myself after this conversation with my aunt. You have frequently informed me, Maximilian, that I was entirely devoid of vanity. I believe that I must admit it, in order to continue the narrative without convicting myself of unpardonable presumption. When I was alone at home, recollecting the conversation of my aunt, I reflected with secret satisfaction, that the Princess Amelia had observed the portrait made six or seven years before, and had, in a few days afterward, asked, in a pleasant manner, if there was any news from the cousin of olden time.

Nothing could be more foolish than to found any hope upon a circumstance so trifling. I confess it. But I have told you I should exhibit toward you the greatest frankness, and I am obliged to own that the insignificant circumstance delighted me.

* Rodolphe had given out, upon his arrival in Germany, that Fleur de Marie, who was, for a long time, supposed to be dead, had never left her mother, the Countess Sarah.

The praises which a lady of my aunt's serious character had bestowed upon the Princess, while they exalted her in my estimation, made her more sensible of the distinction which she had conferred upon me, or rather, which she had conferred upon my portrait. Looking back upon the past, I can scarcely conceive how such rash hopes could be excited by such feeble praises. Although a relative of the Grand Duke, and upon very cordial terms with him, it was impossible to have any well-grounded hope of a union with his daughter, even if she should reciprocate my passion, which was so improbable. Our family supports its rank with honor; but our property is very small, compared with the immense wealth of the Grand Duke, the richest Prince in the German Confederation. Besides, I was hardly twenty-one years of age—a mere Captain of the Guards, without reputation, without any personal distinction: the Grand Duke could never think of me as a son-in-law.

These reflections should have guarded me against a passion which I did not yet feel, but of which I had, if I may so express myself, a strange presentiment. Alas! I surrendered myself to these puerile dreams. I still wore upon my finger a ring which had been given to me by Sheba, the Grand Countess, with whom you are acquainted; and, although I did not regard very highly this token of a childish and smothered passion, I determined to sacrifice it to my new love; and the poor ring disappeared in the rapid current of the river which flowed beneath my window. To describe to you the night which I passed, would be useless; you can yourself imagine it. I knew that the Princess Amelia was a blonde, and of exquisite beauty; and I endeavored to fancy her features, her form, her general appearance, the sound of her voice, the expression of her eyes. I then thought of my own portrait, and recollected, with regret, that the artist had flattered me. I compared, with perfect despair, the picturesque costume of a page of the sixteenth century, with the plain uniform of a Captain of the Guards of his Imperial Majesty. Some generous thoughts, some noble impulses, were mingled with all these singular vagaries. I was impressed with the transcendent excellence of the Princess, who called the poor orphans under her protection her sisters, as my aunt had informed me. Although I have ordinarily a very humble opinion of myself, I was, on this occasion, conceited enough to believe that my portrait had made an impression upon the Princess. I had good sense enough, however, to understand the distance which divided us, and yet I asked myself, with great anxiety, whether I was unworthy of the portrait. In short, although I had never seen her—although I was convinced that she would hardly notice me, yet I thought that it was right to sacrifice to her the token of my first love. I passed the night, and the following day until the hour of audience arrived, in a very painful state of mind. I put on two or three different uniforms without pleasing my taste, and I started for the palace of the Grand Duke, very much dissatisfied with myself. Although Gerolstein is but a short distance from the convent of Saint Hermangilde, during the short ride, a thousand thoughts assailed me. The fancies of the previous night, upon sober reflection, disappeared. A sad, but an irresistible foreboding, informed me that a crisis was approaching, which might influence my whole future life. I had a sort of foreknowledge that I should fall in love—that I should love devotedly, and but once; and that my affections being placed upon so worthy and exalted a being, my passion would be a hopeless and unhappy one. I was so much alarmed by this presentiment, that I ordered the carriage to stop, with the intention of going to the convent and thence returning to my father, and leave with my aunt the task of apologizing to the Grand Duke for my sudden departure from his dominions. Unfortunately, by one of those common accidents, the cause of which is inexplicable, my carriage was arrested at the entrance of the avenue which led to the palace. I motioned to the porter to give my people an order to return, when the Baron and Baroness Kaller, who, like myself, were going to court, perceived me and caused their carriage to stop also. The Baron, seeing me in uniform, said, "Can I be of any service to you, my dear Prince? What has befallen you? Since you are going to the palace, come with us, if any accident has happened to your horses."

Nothing could have been easier for me—do you not think so, my friend?—than to find an excuse for quitting the Baron and regaining the abbey? Well, whether it was owing to irresolution, or to a secret desire to escape the determination which I had made, I answered with an embarrassed air, that I had given an order to my coachman to inquire at the palace-wicket if visiters entered by the new pavilion or the marble court-yard. "They enter by the marble court, my dear Prince," replied the Baron, "for it is a grand gala reception. Order your carriage to follow mine, and I will show you the way."

You know, Maximilian, how much of a fatalist I am: I wished to return to the abbey to spare myself the heart-ache which I anticipated; fate opposed it, and I resigned myself to my star. You have never seen, my friend, the grand-ducal palace of Gerolstein? According to the report of all who have visited the capitals of Europe, there is not, except at Versailles, a royal residence whose entrances and whole effect are more majestic. If I enter into any details on the subject, I must, in recalling at this hour its imposing splendors, ask myself why they did not immediately remind me of my own insignificance; for the Princess Amelia was the daughter of the sovereign master of the palace, of these guards and all this magnificence.

The *court of marble*, a vast *hemicycle*, is so called because, with the exception of a circular road on which roll the carriages, it is paved with marble of all colors, forming magnificent mosaics, in the centre of which is constructed an immense basin of antique marble, fed by abundant waters, which incessantly fall into a lake of porphyry. This court of honor is on all sides adorned with a range of white marble statues of the finest workmanship, bearing torches of gilded bronze, from which spout forth floods of dazzling gas. Alternating with these statues, Medicean vases, elevated on their richly-sculptured stands, held huge laurel-roses, real blossoming trees, whose lustrous foliage, seen in the innumerable lights, gleamed and glittered with a metallic verdure. Carriages drew up in the midst of a double flight of steps, which ascended to the peristyle of the palace; at the foot of this staircase stood as sentries, mounted upon black horses, two chevaliers of the guards of the Grand-Duke, who always chooses his soldiers from the most stalwart subalterns of his army. You, my friend, who are so much in love with soldiers—you would have been struck with the severe and martial aspect of these two colossals, whose cuirasses and casques of steel after an antique pattern, without headpiece or mane, glistened in the light; these cavaliers wore blue coats with yellow collars, pantaloons of white buckskin, and heavy boots reaching above the knee. Since you are so fond of military details, I will add that, at the top of the staircase, on each side of the door, two grenadiers of the Duke's infantry regiment were on duty. Their appearance, save in the color of their dress, was, I was informed, like that of Napoleon's grenadiers. After having traversed the vestibule, in which the liveried yeomen of the Prince were stationed, halberds in hand, I mounted an imposing staircase, which terminated in a portico, ornamented with columns of jasper, and surmounted by a painted and gilded cupola. There two long rows of footmen were stationed. I afterward entered the hall of the guards, at the door of which a chamberlain and an aid-de-camp on service are always to be found, charged with the duty of conducting to his royal Highness those who have a right to be particularly presented. My relationship, though distant enough, entitled me to that honor; an aid-de-camp ushered me through a long gallery, filled with gentlemen in court-dresses or in uniform, and ladies in full costume. While I lightly threaded this brilliant crowd, I heard words spoken which still further increased my emotion. On all sides, they were admiring the angelic beauty of the Princess Amelia, the charming looks of the Marchioness d'Harville, and the truly imperial air of the Archduchess Sophia, who, newly arrived from Munich, with the Archduke Stanislaus, was soon to depart for Warsaw; but every one, while rendering homage to the lofty dignity of the Archduchess and to the gracious demeanor of the Marchioness d'Harville, could not but acknowledge, that nothing could be more ideally perfect than the enchanting face of the Princess Amelia.

As I drew near the spot where the Grand Duke and his daughter stood, my heart was beating violently. At the moment when I reached the door of the *salon*, (I forgot to tell you there was a ball and concert at the court,) the illustrious Listz seated himself at the piano. An entire silence succeeded to the light murmur of conversation. While awaiting the conclusion of the piece, which the grand artist played with his accustomed superiority, I remained within the embrasure of a door. Then, my dear Maximilian, then for the first time I saw the Princess Amelia. Allow me to paint this scene, for it affords me unspeakable delight to revive such recollections.

Imagine, my friend, a vast *salon*, furnished with a royal sumptuousness, blazing with light and hung with tapestry of crimson silk, along which ran a foliage of gold embroidered in relief. In the first rank, upon large golden fauteuils, sate the Archduchess Sophia, (the Prince himself did the honors of the palace,) on the left the Marchioness d'Harville, and on her right the Princess Amelia. Standing behind them was the Grand Duke, wearing the uniform of a Colonel of his Guards; he seemed to be made young again by happiness, and no more than thirty years old; the military habit set off to advantage the elegance of his form and the beauty of his features: near him was the Archduke Stanislaus in the costume of a field-marshal; then came the ladies of honor to the

Princess Amelia, the wives of the great dignitaries of the court; and last, the dignitaries themselves. Must I tell you that the Princess Amelia reigned over this glittering crowd, far less on account of her rank than her grace and beauty? Do not condemn me, my friend, till you have read the portrait. Though it must be a thousand times below the reality, you will understand my adoration—you will comprehend why, from the first moment I saw her, I loved her, and that the rapidity of my passion can be equalled only by its violence and duration.

The Princess Amelia, clad in a simple robe of white *moire*, wore, like the Archduchess Sophia, the great ribbon of the Imperial Order of Nepomacène, which had recently been sent to her by the Empress. A band of pearls, encircling her noble and spotless brow, charmingly harmonized with two large folds of exquisite flaxen hair, which dropped upon her faintly-crimsoned cheeks; her delicious arms, whiter than the billows of lace from which they fell, were half concealed by gloves that extended to her dimpled elbows; nothing could be more perfect than her shape—nothing prettier than her little foot, cased in white satin. At the moment I saw her, her big eyes, of the purest blue, were deeply pensive; I know not whether at that instant she felt the subduing influence of some serious thought, or whether she was moved thus keenly by the sombre harmony of the music, played by Listz; but her half-smile seemed to me full of sweetness and an indescribable melancholy. With her head slightly bending toward her breast, she mechanically tore away the leaves of a huge bouquet of carnations and roses that she held in her hand. Never can I express to you what I then experienced; all that my aunt had told me of the ineffable goodness of the Princess Amelia recurred to my mind. Smile, my friend; but I could not prevent the tears that flowed to my eyes when I saw that young *girl*, so admirably beautiful, surrounded with honors, respected, yes, idolized by a father like her's, pensive and almost sad.

Maximilian, I have often said to you—that as I believe man incapable of tasting certain enjoyments, as it were, too complete, too immense for his contracted senses, also I believe certain beings to be too divinely endowed not to feel, at times, most bitterly how they are *isolated* here below; and vaguely regret that exquisite delicacy, which exposes them to so many deceptions—to so many rude collisions with less elevated natures. It seemed to me, then, that the Princess Amelia experienced the influence of a similar thought.

Sudden is by a strange chance, (all is fatality in this affair) she turned her eyes to the place where I stood. You know how scrupulously etiquette and the hierarchy of ranks is observed with us. Thanks to my title, and to the ties of relationship which bind me to the Grand Duke, the people in the midst of whom I was at first placed, withdrew, so that I remained nearly alone, in the embrasure of the door of the gallery, and quite conspicuous to the first rank. It was owing to this circumstance that the Princess Amelia, awakening from her revery, perceived and doubtless recognized me, for she made a slight gesture of surprise and blushed. She had seen my portrait in the abbey at my aunt's house, and knew me; nothing could be clearer. The Princess had hardly looked at me for a second, when I experienced so deep, so overwhelming an emotion, that my cheeks burned as if they were on fire. I cast down my eyes, and so remained for several minutes, without daring again to raise them to the Princess. When I ventured to do so, she was conversing in a low tone with the Archduchess, who seemed to listen to her with the most affectionate interest. Listz, having put an interval of a few minutes between the two pieces he was to play, the Grand Duke took occasion to convey to him his approbation in the most gracious manner. The Prince, in returning to his place, saw me, bowed with an air of great kindness, and spoke a few words to the Archduchess, as he pointed me out to her. The latter, after having for an instant observed me, turned again to the Grand Duke, who could not prevent himself from smiling as he replied to her, and then addressed his daughter. The Princess Amelia seemed to be embarrassed, for a deeper blush crimsoned her cheeks.

I was in torture; unhappily, etiquette did not suffer me to quit my station before the end of the concert, which soon recommenced. Two or three times I stole a glance at the Princess Amelia; she appeared to me pensive and sad. My heart was wrung; I suffered for the slight annoyance which I thought I had occasioned. I can guess the cause. Doubtless the Grand Duke had jestingly asked her, if she found in me any resemblance to her cousin of the olden time; and, in her ingenuousness she had, perhaps, reproached herself for not having told her father that she had already recognized me. The concert ended, I followed the aid-de-camp; he conducted me to the Grand Duke, who kindly advanced to meet me, took me cordially by the arm, and said to the Archduchess Sophia, as he approached her—

"I ask permission of your royal Highness to present to you my cousin, Prince Henry of d'Herkausen Oldenzaal."

"I have formerly seen the Prince at Vienna, and I am happy to meet him here," answered the Archduchess, before whom I bowed profoundly.

"My dear Amelia," continued the Prince, addressing his daughter, "I present to you Prince Henry, your cousin; he is a son of the Prince Paul, one of my most venerated friends, whom I sincerely regret not to greet to-day at Gerolstein."

"Will you be so kind, sir, as to assure Prince Paul how sincerely I sympathize in my father's regrets, for I am always most happy to know his friends," answered my cousin, with a most graceful simplicity.

I had never before heard my cousin's voice; its tones were like those of the sweetest, purest, most melodious instrument—tones, which vibrate on the most delicate chords of the soul.

"I trust, dear Henry," said the Grand Duke, "that you will tarry long with your aunt—a lady whom I respect as a son respects his mother. Come and see us often, without ceremony, in the afternoon; if we walk out, you can make one of the party; I have always loved you, because you have one of the noblest hearts I know."

"I am at a loss how to express to your royal Highness, my gratitude for the kindly welcome which you have condescended to bestow upon me."

"Well, by way of testifying your gratitude," said the Prince, smiling, "ask the hand of your cousin for the second contra dance; since the first belongs, by right, to the Archduke."

"Will your Highness vouchsafe this favor?" said I, bowing to the Princess Amelia.

"Address one another by the simple title of cousin," gayly said the Grand Duke; "ceremony should not be observed among relations."

"My cousin, will you do me the honor to dance the second contra dance with me?"

"Yes, my cousin," answered the Princess Amelia.

I know not, my friend, how to express the mingled happiness and sorrow with which the paternal cordiality of the Grand Duke inspired me. The confidence which he evinced, the affectionate kindness with which he had commanded his daughter and myself to substitute, for the formulas of etiquette, the titles of relationship and tender intimacy, aroused the liveliest gratitude: but, at the same time, I made a silent resolution (and faithfully have I kept it) never to utter a word which could make my cousin suspect the love I bore her; but I feared lest my emotion, my looks should betray me. But, in spite of myself, the sentiment, though silent and hidden as it ought ever to be, seemed a guilty one. I had time to make these reflections while the Princess Amelia was going through the first contra dance with the Archduke Stanislaus. Here, as elsewhere, this dance is nothing more than a kind of march to the music of the orchestra. Nothing could have displayed to greater advantage the serious grace of my cousin's demeanor.

I felt a joy mingled with anxiety as I awaited for the moment when a pause in the dance would allow me to converse with my cousin. I was sufficiently master of myself to conceal my emotion, when I approached her as she stood by the side of the Marchioness d'Harville. In reflecting upon the circumstances connected with the portrait, I thought that the Princess Amelia would partake of my embarrassment: I was deceived: I can remember, word for word, our first conversation: suffer me to repeat it to you.

"Will your Highness permit me," said I, "to call you my cousin, as the Grand Duke has authorized me?"

"Certainly, my cousin," she gracefully replied; "I am always happy to obey my father."

"And I am most proud of this intimacy, since my aunt has taught me to know you—I mean to appreciate you truly."

"My father has often spoken to me of you—and you will, perhaps, be surprised to know," she added, timidly, "that I knew you by sight, if I may so call it, immediately. The Superior of Saint Hermangilde, for whom I feel the most respectful affection, one day showed my father and myself your portrait."

"In which I am represented as a page of the sixteenth century."

"Yes, my cousin; and my father was even deceitful enough to tell me that this portrait was the likeness of a relative of the olden time, and he said many kind things about that cousin. It seems that our family has reason to congratulate itself upon reckoning him among its connections of the present."

"Alas! my cousin, I am afraid that I bear but faint resemblance to the flattering moral portrait which the Grand Duke deigned to draw of the page of the sixteenth century."

"You deceive yourself," naïvely answered the princess, "for at the end of the concert, as I chanced to look around the gallery,

I recognised you instantly, notwithstanding the difference of costume." Then, wishing, doubtless, to change the subject of a conversation which embarrassed her, she said:

"How admirable is the talent of M. Listz! is it not?"

"Admirable! and with how much pleasure you listened to him!"

"It seems to me that there is, in truth, a double charm in music without words. Not only do we enjoy the admirable performance, but we can adapt our passing thoughts to the melodies we hear, and make them, as it were, the accompaniment. I know not whether you comprehend me, my cousin?"

"Perfectly; our thoughts are always words with which we mentally accompany the music that we hear."

"That is it, that is it; you understand me;" said she, with a gesture of gracious satisfaction—"I feared that I could not express what I felt during the performance of that plaintive and touching melody"

"Thank God, my cousin, we have no words to set to so sad an air."

Either because my question was indiscreet and she wished to avoid a reply, or because she did not understand me, the Princess Amelia suddenly pointed out to my notice the Grand Duke, who, with the Duchess on his arm, was then walking among the dancers in the gallery.

"My cousin, look at my father—how handsome he is! how noble and excellent a deportment! With what attention all gaze upon him! It seems to me that the people love more than they revere him!"

"Ah!" I exclaimed, "it is not here alone, in the midst of his court, that he is beloved. If benedictions can resound to posterity, the name of Rodolphe of Gerolstein will indeed be immortal."

My enthusiasm in thus speaking was most sincere, for you know, my friend, that the territory of the Prince is rightfully called "The Paradise of Germany." It is impossible to describe the grateful looks of my cousin, when she heard me speak in this manner.

"Thus to appreciate my father," said she, "is to be worthy of the attachment which he feels for you."

"No one admires and loves him more than I do. Besides, in addition to these rare qualities which constitute a great prince, is he not endowed with that genius of goodness which makes a great prince beloved?"

"You know not how truly you speak!" cried the Princess, with deeper emotion.

"Oh! I know it, I know it; and all whom he governs know it as well as I. They love him so much that they are as much distressed by his misfortunes as they are rejoiced at his happiness; the eagerness with which they came to pay their homage to the Grand Duchess both approves the choice of his royal Highness and the worth of the future Grand Duchess."

"The Marchioness d'Harville is as worthy as she can be of the love of my father; and this is the highest eulogium that I can bestow upon her."

"And you can, I doubt not, appreciate her justly; for you must have known her in Paris, my cousin."

Hardly had I spoken these words, when a sudden and indescribable shadow seemed to pass over the spirit of the Princess Amelia; she cast down her eyes, and, for a moment, her features wore an expression of sadness which struck me dumb with astonishment. We were, then, at the end of the contra-dance; the last figure separated me, for a moment, from my cousin. When, at length, I reconducted her to the Marchioness d'Harville, it seemed to me that her features were still somewhat sad. I believed then, and I still believe, that my allusion to the sojourn of the Princess in France, recalled the memory of her mother, and caused the painful sensation to which I alluded.

During the evening, I remarked a circumstance which might, perhaps, appear to you puerile, but which to me was a new proof of the interest, with which this young girl was regarded by every one. Her head-band of pearls, being somewhat disarranged, the Archduchess Sophia, to whom she offered her arm, had the kindness to arrange the jewelry on her brow. Now, to one who knew the proverbial *hauteur* of the Archduchess, such an attention on her part seemed scarcely credible: and indeed the Princess Amelia, whom I observed attentively at the moment, appeared at once so confused—so grateful—I might almost say so embarrassed, that a bright tear glistened in her eye. The condescension was not unappreciated.

Such, my friend, was my first soirée at Gerolstein. If I have described it to you in minute detail, it is because nearly all these circumstances have sooner or later been attended by results which materially affected my welfare.

I shall now be brief: I shall relate only a few of the chief facts concerning my frequent interviews with my cousin and her father

Two days after the fete, I was one of a small party invited to the celebration of the Grand Duke's marriage with the Marchioness d'Harville. Never did I see the the countenance of the Princess Amelia more radiant and calm than during this ceremony. She regarded her father and the Marchioness with a sort of religious rapture which invested her features with a new charm. Her charming appearance might have been said to reflect the unspeakable happiness of the Prince and the Marchioness d'Harville.

On that occasion, my cousin was very gay, and even witty. I gave her my arm during a promenade after dinner in the palace-gardens, which were magnificently illuminated. She said to me, with reference to her father's marriage—

"It seems to me that the happiness of those we love is even sweeter than our own; for there is invariably a shade of selfishness in the enjoyment of our own felicity."

If, my friend, I have selected this reflection of my cousin's from a thousand, it is that you may see into the heart of this adorable creature, who, like her father, has really a genius for goodness.

Several days after the Grand Duke's marriage, I had a long conversation with him: he made inquiries concerning the past, and my plans for the future: he gave me the wisest counsel, and the most flattering encouragement. He even told me several of his political projects, with a confidence, which, I confess, flattered my pride. In short, he said so much that I scarce know what to tell you. For an instant, a foolish idea crossed my mind; I supposed that the Prince had discovered my love, and that, by conversing with me, he wished to examine my motives, sound my intentions, and perhaps lead me to some acknowledgment. . . .

Enough: this foolish notion did not last long: the Prince closed our conversation with the remark, that the time for great wars had passed away; that I ought to profit by my name, my alliances, my education, and the intimate friendship which subsisted between my father and Prince Metternich, prime minister to the Emperor; that thus my career would be diplomatic instead of military; and that all the questions which had formerly been decided upon the battle-field, were now to be decided in congress. He added, moreover, that the ancient traditions of tortuous and faithless diplomacy would give way to a large and philanthropic policy, keeping pace with the real interests of the people, who were daily becoming more thoroughly conscious of their rights; that an elevated, loyal, and generous spirit, might, within a few years, have a great and noble part to play in political affairs, thus exerting an extensive and beneficial influence: and he finally offered me his sovereign protection and aid to further my views on entering public life.

You must see, my friend, that if the Prince had intended to refer to his daughter, he would not have made such overtures. I thanked him for his offers with a lively gratitude, adding that I felt the value of his advice, and that I had determined to follow it.

I was careful, at first, that my visits to the palace should not be too frequent; but, thanks to the pressing invitations of the Grand Duke, I soon acquiren the habit of going thither every day about three o'clock. He lived in all the charming simplicity which characterizes our German courts. It was such life as they enjoy in the great châteaux of England, rendered more attractive by the cordial simplicity and the delightful freedom of German manners. When the weather permitted, we took long rides on horseback with the Grand Duke, the Grand Duchess, my cousin, and their friends. When we remained at the palace, we occupied ourselves with music: I sang with the Grand Duchess and my cousin, whose voice had a tone of unequalled purity and softness, to which I never listened without feeling that the depths of my soul were stirred. At other times we visited, one after another, the wonderful collections of pictures and works of art, or examined the Prince's libraries: you know that he is one of the most learned and clear-headed men in Europe. I as often returned to dine at the palace; and, on opera days, I accompanied the Grand Duke's family to the theatre.

Every day passed like a dream. Gradually my cousin treated me with a familiarity quite fraternal. She never concealed the pleasure which my presence gave her: two or three times she begged me to accompany her when she went with the Grand Duchess to visit her orphan children, as some of her objects of charity were called; and she often spoke to me of my prospects with a maturity of judgment, and a serious, reflective interest, which, proceeding from a girl of her years, astonished me. She loved, also, to inquire concerning my childhood, and my mother, alas! always so deeply regretted. Every time I wrote to my father, she begged me to send him her remembrances; besides, as she embroidered splendidly, she gave me one day a beautiful piece of tapestry for him, at which she had been working for a long time. What shall I tell you, my friend? A brother and

sister, meeting after long years of separation, could not have enjoyed an intimacy more sweet: and when, by some extraordinary chance, we happened to be alone, the arrival of a third person could never change the subject, or even the tone of our conversation.

You will perhaps be surprised, my friend, at such close intercourse between two young people: above all, when you think of the confessions I make to you. But the more confidence my cousin placed in me, and the more familiarity she extended to me, the more I watched myself, the more I restrained myself, lest I should live to see the end of this delightful friendship. And then, what increased my reserve still more, was, that the Princess evinced, in all her intercourse with me, so much freedom, so much noble reliance, and, above all, so little coquetry, that I am well-nigh certain she never suspected my violent passion. There remains only one slight doubt on this subject, arising from a circumstance, which I shall tell you immediately.

If this fraternal intimacy had been destined to last for ever, perhaps my bliss would have been complete. But, from the very relish with which I enjoyed it, I feared lest some service, or the new career on which the Prince wished me to enter, should soon call me to Vienna, or among strangers. I feared, in short, that, perhaps immediately, the Grand Duke would think of marrying his daughter in a manner worthy of her.

These thoughts became so much the more painful as the hour of my departure approached. My cousin soon remarked the change which was visible in my behavior. On the very night of the day which separated us, she told me that, for some time, she had found me gloomy and abstracted. I endeavored to evade her questions in such a way that she might not conjecture my meaning. I attributed my sadness to general ennui, without ascribing it to any particular cause.

"I cannot believe you," said she to me; "my father treats you almost like a son; all the world loves you: for you to be unhappy, is to be ungrateful."

"Well," said I, in reply, scarce able to subdue my emotion, "this is not ennui; *it is disappointment*: yes, it is a deep disappointment that preys upon me."

"And why? What has happened to you?" she inquired, with interest.

"You have told me, this moment, cousin, that your father treats me like a son, and that all the world loves me. Well, ere long, I must renounce all these precious attachments: I must, in short——leave Gerolstein; and, I confess to you, this thought comes like a blight over my hopes."

"And the remembrance of those who are dear to us? Is that, then, nothing, my cousin?"

"Doubtless; but years — events — bring such unforeseen changes!"

"There are, at least, affections which do not change. That which my father has ever shown for you—that which I feel for you, is of the number, and you know it well! We shall never forget one another—we are brother and sister!" continued she, raising her large blue eyes, moist with tears.

This look deprived me of self-command—I was on the point of betraying myself: fortunately I regained my composure.

"It is true our affections *do* last!" I said, with embarrassment; "but our positions change. When I return, cousin, some years hence, do you believe that this intimacy, the charm of which I so much value—do you believe it will still continue?"

"Why should it not?"

"Because then you will doubtless be married, cousin: you will have other duties; and—you will forget your poor brother!"

I protest to you, my friend, that this was all I said to her; I have still to learn, whether, in these expressions, she discovered an avowal which offended her, or whether, like myself, she was painfully struck with the inevitable changes which the future would necessarily cause in our acquaintance. But instead of answering me, she remained silent for a moment, seemingly overwhelmed in thought; then rising hastily, with a pale and agitated expression, she left the room, after having for a few seconds examined some embroidery which the young Countess d'Oppenheim, one of her maids of honor, was working, in the recess of one of the windows of the room in which we had held our conversation.

On the evening of that day I received from my father another letter, requiring my immediate presence here. The next morning I went to take leave of the Grand Duke: he told me that my cousin was rather indisposed, and that he would make my adieus to her; he folded me to his heart with all a father's affection, regretting my hasty departure, and that it should have been occasioned by the ill-health of my father, and then, with great kindness, recalling to my mind the advice he had given me as to the new career, which he very earnestly recommended to my adoption, he added that, on my return from the mission I was undertaking, it would afford him the most lively pleasure again to receive me at Gerolstein.

I fortunately found, upon my arrival here, my father's health in a much better state than I had expected; he still keeps his bed, and is extremely feeble, but I no longer feel very serious uneasiness on his account. Unfortunately he perceived my despondency, my gloomy taciturnity. He has several times, but ineffectually, entreated me to confide to him the cause of my great sadness.

I sate up with him; we were alone; thinking that he slept, I gave vent to my grief; I could not restrain the tears which flowed silently from my eyes, while thinking of the happy days I had passed at Gerolstein. He saw me weeping, for he only dozed now and then, and I was completely absorbed by my melancholy thoughts; he questioned me with touching goodness; I attributed my sorrow to the uneasiness I had felt regarding his health, but he was not the dupe of this subterfuge.

Now that I have told you all, my dear Maximilian, tell me, is not my fate most hopeless—what should I do? what resolve upon?

Oh! my friend, I cannot tell you the anguish that I suffer. What will come of it? oh God! All is lost! I am the most miserable of men, if my father do not renounce the project he has formed.

I will tell you what has just occurred.

A short time ago I was about to close this letter, when, to my great consternation, my father, whom I thought in bed, came into the room where I was writing; he saw upon my desk the first four pages of my letter to you; I was almost at the conclusion.

"To whom are you writing at such length?" said my father smiling.

"To Maximilian, my father."

"Oh!" rejoined he, with an expression of affectionate reproach, "I know *he* enjoys your full confidence—*how happy must he be!*"

He pronounced these last words in so heart-broken a tone that, touched by his sorrowful accents, I, without reflecting for a moment, handed him the letter, saying "Read it, my father."

My friend, he read every word that I had written. Can you imagine what he said to me, after several minutes of meditation?

"Henry, I shall write to the Grand Duke and inform him of all that passed while you remained at Gerolstein."

"I conjure you, my father, do not think of it."

"Is all you have related to Maximilian scrupulously true?"

"Yes, every word."

"In that case, your conduct hitherto has been irreproachable—the Prince will know how to appreciate it. But you must not for the future show yourself unworthy of his confidence, and you would do so, were you to abuse his kind offer by returning to Gerolstein with the intention, perhaps, of gaining the affections of his daughter."

"Can you for a moment believe, my dear father—"

"I believe that you love her passionately; and passion, sooner or later, becomes a bad counsellor."

"Is it possible, my father, that you will write to the Prince?"

"That you love his daughter most devotedly."

"In the name of Heaven, let me entreat you not to do so!"

"Do you love your cousin?"

"I love her to idolatry; but—"

My father interrupted me. "That being the case, I shall write to the Grand Duke, and in your name ask the hand of his daughter."

"Such pretensions on my part would be utter madness."

"'Tis true. I must, nevertheless, frankly make this proposal to the Prince, stating the reasons which impel me to it. He received you with the greatest hospitality—his goodness toward you was almost paternal, and it would be unworthy of either of us were we to deceive him. I know his exalted soul: he will consider my proceeding as that of an honest man. Should he refuse to give you his daughter, and that is almost indubitable, he will know that, henceforward, should you return to Gerolstein, you can no longer live on the same intimate footing with her. You have freely shown to me, my son," added my father, with great goodness, "the letter you wrote to Maximilian. I am now acquainted with every circumstance; it is my *duty* to write to the Grand Duke, and I shall write to him instantly."

You know, my friend, that my father is the best of men, but he has an inflexible tenacity of will, in whatever regards that which he conceives his *duty*. Judge of the anguish, the tears I now suffer. Although the step he is about to take is no more than frank and honorable, I am not the less agitated. How will the Grand Duke receive this mad proposal? will he not be amazed at my temerity? and will not the Princess Amelia feel hurt at my having allowed my father to take such a resolution without first obtaining her approval?

Pity me, my friend, I know not what to think; I am like one gazing into an abyss; my head turns round.

I hastily close this long letter; I will soon write to you again. Again I say, pity me, for verily I fear I shall go mad, should the fever which now agitates me last much longer. Adieu, adieu. With all my heart, and for ever yours, HENRY D'H. O.

We shall now conduct our readers to the palace of Gerolstein, where Fleur de Marie had resided since her return from France.

CHAPTER II. ..... THE PRINCESS AMELIA.

THE apartment occupied by Fleur de Marie (we will not call her the Princess Amelia, save in an *official* sense,) in the Grand-Ducal palace, had, by the care of Rodolphe, been furnished in a style of perfect taste and elegance. From the balcony of the young girl's oratory were descried afar the twin towers of the convent of Saint Hermangilde, which, springing upward from immense masses of verdure, were themselves overtopped by a lofty, forest-crowned mountain, at the base of which rose the abbey. It was a beautiful summer morning; and Fleur de Marie suffered her eyes to wander over the splendid landscape which stretched afar. Her hair was folded on her brow, and she wore a high robe of a white and spring-like fabric, lightly streaked with blue; a large collar of simple cambric, falling back upon her shoulders, displayed the ends and tie of a little silken cravat, of the same blue color as the cincture of her robe. Seated in a wide *fauteuil* of sculptured ebony, the back of which was covered with deep crimson velvet, her elbow supported on one of the arms of the seat, and her head slightly bent forward, she leaned her cheek on her fairy-like hand, in whose snowy texture lightly wandered veins of a declicate azure. The languishing attitude of Fleur de Marie, her paleness, the fixedness of her eye, the bitterness of her half-smile, betrayed a profound melancholy. After the lapse of a few minutes, she drew a long and sorrowful sigh; then, letting the hand fall which supported her cheek, she bowed her head more lowly upon her breast. The unfortunate girl seemed weighed down by the burden of some heavy calamity.

At that moment, a woman of an advanced age, of a grave and distinguished countenance, and dressed with an elegant simplicity, entered almost timidly into the oratory, and lightly touched Fleur de Marie to attract her attention. The latter, awaking from her revery, quickly raised her head, and, saluting the new comer with a motion full of grace, said,

"What do you wish, my dear Countess?"

"I come to inform your Highness that my lord desires to visit you; he will be here shortly," answered the lady of honor with respectful formality.

"Indeed; I am surprised that I have not yet been permitted to embrace my father. Every morning do I await his coming with so much impatience! But I hope that it is not owing to any indisposition of Mademoiselle d'Harlein, that I have, for two days in succession, had the pleasure to see you at the palace, my dear Countess?"

"That your Highness may have no solicitude on this subject, I will say that Mademoiselle d'Harlein begged me to be her substitute for to-day; to-morrow she will resume her service near your Highness, who will deign to excuse this change."

"Certainly, for I shall be no loser by it: having had the pleasure of your society for two successive days, my dear Countess, I shall for the next two days have Mademoiselle d'Harlein near me."

"Your Highness is so gracious," answered the lady of honor, again bowing lowly, "that your kindness encourages me to solicit a favor—"

"Speak, speak; you know my anxiety to gratify you!"

"It is true that your Highness has for a long time made me familiar with obligations; but the present subject is one of so painful a nature that I should not have the courage to approach it, did it not involve a most meritorious action; I rely, moreover, upon the extreme indulgence of your Highness."

"You have not the slightest need of my indulgence, my dear Countess; I am always most gratified for any opportunity to do a little good."

"My petition relates to a poor creature, who unhappily quitted Gerolstein before your Highness had founded that excellent and charitable establishment for the relief of young girls, either orphan or abandoned, and utterly unprotected from the storm of evil passions."

"And what has she done? What do you require for her?"

"Her father, a very adventurous person, went to seek his fortune in America, leaving his wife and daughter to a precarious existence. The mother died: the daughter, scarcely sixteen years old, left to her own guidance, fled from the country to Vienna with a seducer, who soon deserted her. As it always happens, this first step on the pathway of vice conducted the unhappy girl to an abyss of infamy. In a short time she became, like many other wretched victims, a disgrace to her sex——."

Fleur de Marie cast down her eyes, blushed, and could not conceal a slight shudder which did not escape the notice of the lady of honor. The latter, fearful of having wounded the chaste feelings of the princess by speaking to her of such a creature, continued with embarrassment:

"I beg your Highness a thousand pardons. I have, doubtless, shocked you by drawing your attention to so wicked a life; but the unhappy wretch manifests so sincere a repentance, that I have ventured to solicit a little pity for her."

"And you are right. Go on, I pray you," said Fleur de Marie, suppressing her sorrowful emotion; "all errors are worthy of commiseration, when they are followed by repentance."

"So it happened in this instance, as I have observed to your Highness. After two years of abominable sin, grace touched the soul of this deserted girl. Overtaken by a tardy remorse, she has come home again. It so happened that, on her arrival here, she took lodgings at a house which belongs to a worthy widow, endeared to every one by her mildness and piety. Encouraged by the holy sympathy of the widow, the poor creature has confessed all her faults, avowing a just detestation of her past life, and her desire to purchase, at the expense of the severest penitence, the privileges of entering a religious house where she can expiate her sins and merit their forgiveness. The worthy widow, in whom she confided, knowing that I had the honor to serve your Highness, wrote to me to recommend this miserable girl, so that, by the all-powerful intervention of your Highness with the Princess Julianne, the superior of the abbey, she may hope to be admitted as a serving-sister in the convent of Saint Hermangilde; she asks, as a favor, that she may be employed in the most painful toils, so that her penitence may be rendered more deserving. I often conversed with the woman before allowing myself to implore your Highness's compassion, and I am firmly convinced that her repentance will be lasting. It is neither want nor age which has brought her back to virtue; she is scarcely eighteen, she is still very beautiful, and she possesses a small sum of money, which it is her desire to devote to some charitable purpose, if she can obtain the favor which she solicits."

"I take upon myself the charge of your protegé," said Fleur de Marie, with difficulty repressing her emotion; so much did her own past life resemble that of the unhappy one, for whom her charity had been implored; she then added, "The repentance of this poor outcast is too praiseworthy not to be encouraged."

"I am at a loss how to express my gratitude to your Highness. I hardly dared to hope that you would interest yourself so kindly for a being like this."

"She has sinned; she repents," said Fleur de Marie, in accents of commiseration and unspeakable sadness; "it is just that we should pity her. The more sincere her remorse, the more dreadful must be her suffering, my dear Countess."

"I think I hear my lord," suddenly exclaimed the lady of honor, without observing the profound and increasing emotion of Fleur de Marie.

Rodolphe had, in fact, entered the antechamber of the oratory, holding in his hand an enormous *bouquet* of roses. At the sight of the Prince, the Countess discreetly withdrew. Hardly had she disappeared, when Fleur de Marie threw herself upon the neck of her father, and reclined her forehead upon his shoulder. In that posture she remained several moments without speaking.

"Good morrow, good morrow, my darling child," said Rodolphe, embracing his daughter with the fondest affection, and not yet perceiving her grief. "Look at this bunch of roses! What a beautiful harvest I have reaped for you this morning! This prevented me from coming sooner. I do not think that I ever brought you a more magnificent *bouquet!* Look here?" And the Prince, still holding the bouquet, made a slight retrogade movement, so as to disengage himself from the embrace of his daughter, and to look upon her; but seeing the tears gushing from her eyes, he tossed the bouquet upon a table, took Fleur de Marie's hand in his own, and cried—

"You weep. My God! what is the cause?"

"Nothing, my dear father," said Fleur de Marie, drying her tears, and trying to smile upon Rodolphe.

"I conjure you, tell me what it is—what has happened to distress you?"

"I assure you, my father, that it is nothing which should give you uneasiness. The Countess came to implore my intercession in behalf of a poor woman—so interesting—so unfortunate—that, in spite of myself, I was deeply moved at the recital of her story."

"Is this true? Is it only that?"

"Nothing more," said Fleur de Marie, taking from the table the flowers that Rodolphe had flung there. "But how you spoil me!"

added she; "what a magnificent bouquet! and every day, you bring me one just like this, culled by your own hands."

"My child," said Rodolphe, contemplating his daughter with anxiety, "you are concealing something from me. Your smile is mournful and constrained. I again conjure you to tell me what it is that grieves you. Do not think of the bouquet."

"Oh! you know, dear father, the bouquet is my delight every morning; and then I love roses so much! I have always loved them so much! You remember," added she, with a heart-breaking smile, "you remember my poor little rose-bush, the dried fragments of which I always kept?"

At this painful allusion to the past, Rodolphe exclaimed:—"Unhappy child! my suspicions, then, are well-founded? In the midst of the splendors which surround you, you still sometimes recall that dreadful period? Alas! I had fondly trusted that I had caused you to forget it by the power of my tenderness."

"Pardon—pardon, my father. These words escaped me. I afflict you."

"I am grieved, poor angel," mournfully replied Rodolphe, "because these recollections of the past must be fearful to you—because they must poison your life, if you have the weakness to resign yourself to them."

"My father, it was accidental. Since our arrival here—this is the first time—"

"It is the first time that you have spoken to me on the subject—yes; but, perhaps, it is not the first time that your thoughts have tormented you. I have remarked these fits of melancholy, and sometimes have accused the past of creating your sorrow. But, while I was uncertain, I dared not endeavor to combat the fatal influence of these reminiscences, to show you their nothingness, their injustice; for if your melancholy had been owing to another cause—had the past been to you what it ought to be, a vain and evil dream, I ran the risk of awakening in your breast those painful thoughts which I wished to destroy."

"How very good you are! and how do these fears bear witness to your ineffable tenderness!"

"My position was so difficult—so delicate. I assure you that, although I said nothing, I was unceasingly reflecting upon what could have grieved you. In contracting a marriage which crowns all my wishes, I believed that I was giving you a further assurance of repose. I was too well aware of the excessive delicacy of your heart to feel that you would for ever banish all thoughts of the past—but I said to myself that if it chanced that your mind should linger on that period, you would, when you reflected that you were cherished with maternal fondness by the noble woman who knew you in the depth of your misfortunes, you would learn to look upon the past as sufficiently expiated by your dreadful sorrows, and be indulgent, or, rather, just toward yourself—for, indeed, my wife has, from her rare qualities, a right to the respect of all. Is it not so? Well—since you are to her as a daughter, as a cherished sister, ought you not to be quieted? Is not her attachment a perfect solace? Does it not say that she knows as well as I do that you were a victim, and not guilty—that there is nothing to reproach but the misfortunes, which have weighed you down from your birth? Had you even committed a thousand great faults, would they not have been expiated a thousand times, by all the good you have done, by whatever has been developed in your nature, that is excellent and adorable?"

"My father."

"Oh, I pray you, let me speak all my thoughts, since chance, doubtless a blessed chance, has brought about this conversation. For a long time have I desired and yet feared it. God grant that it may have a salutary influence! It is my duty to make you forget these fearful sorrows; so august, so sacred was the character of my mission, that I should have had the courage to sacrifice to your repose my love for the Marchioness D'Harville, my friendship for Murph, had I thought that their presence would too mournfully have recalled the past."

"Oh, my dear father, can you believe it? Their presence, the presence of those who know—*what I was*—and who, notwithstanding, love me tenderly—does it not, on the contrary, personify forgetfulness and pardon? Truly, my father, my whole life would have been desolate had you, on my account, renounced your marriage with the Marchioness D'Harville?"

"Oh, I should not have been the only one to desire this sacrifice, had it been necessary to assure your happiness. You know not what penance Clemence would have voluntarily imposed upon herself—for she also understood the extent of my duty toward you."

"Your duty toward me! good Heavens! what have I done to merit so much!"

"What have you done, poor, beloved angel. 'Till the moment when you were restored to me, your life had been nothing but bitterness, misery, and desolation; and I reproach myself for your hard sufferings as if I had myself created them. Therefore, when I see you smiling, contented, I think that I am forgiven—my only aim, my only wish is to render you as pre-eminently happy as you have been wretched, to elevate you as much as you have been abased; for I fondly dream that the last vestiges of the past are effaced when I see you receiving the homage, the respect of the most eminent and most honorable in rank and talent."

"Respect for me? no, no, my father—but for my rank, or rather for the rank which you have given me."

"Oh! it is not your rank that they love, that they revere—it is you, my beloved child—understand me well—it is yourself; you alone. There is an homage which rank demands, but there is one, also, imposed by beauty and accomplishments. You know not that, by a prodigy of understanding and of tact, which renders me as proud of you as I am fond, you deport yourself in all these novel and courtly ceremonies with a modesty and grace, to which the most haughty must pay homage."

"You love me so much, my father, and are yourself so much beloved, that they feel sure of pleasing you by showing me this deference."

"Oh! the naughty child!" exclaimed Rodolphe, interrupting his daughter, and tenderly embracing her, "the naughty child, who will not grant me the satisfaction of a father's pride."

"Is not that pride as fully satisfied by attributing to yourself alone, dear father, that good-will which they evince toward me?"

"Certainly not, Mademoiselle," said the Prince, smiling at his daughter to chase away the sorrow which still oppressed her; "no, Mademoiselle, it is by no means the same thing; for I cannot be proud of myself, and I may and ought to be proud of you—yes, proud! Again I tell you, you know not how divinely you are endowed. In fifteen months your education has been so marvellously accomplished, that the most fastidious mother would be enthusiastic at your progress; and this education has increased the almost irresistible influence which you exercise over all those who approach you—and even without your being sensible of it."

"My father, your praises confuse me."

"I speak the truth, and the truth only. Shall I give you proofs of it? Let us revert boldly to the past, it is an enemy whom I wish to meet hand to hand; we must look him in the face. Well! do you remember Louve, that courageous woman who saved you? Recall to mind the scene in the prison which you related to me: a crowd of prisoners, more ignorant even than wicked, were bent upon tormenting one of their companions, who was feeble and helpless; you appeared—you spoke to them, and instantly these furies, blushing at their cowardly cruelty toward their victim, became as charitable to her as they had been cruel. Was that nothing? And again, was it or was it not your work, that this Louve, the most ungovernable of women, turned to repentance, and longed for an honest though laborious life? Believe me, my beloved child, she who could overawe Louve and her turbulent companions by the sole influence of goodness, fortified by a rare elevation of mind, although in other circumstances and in an entirely opposite sphere, could, by the same charm, (do not smile at my comparing them,) fascinate the haughty Archduchess Sophia, and all my court; for good and wicked, great and small, always bend to the influence of superior souls. I do not mean to say that you are a *princess by nature*, according to the aristocratic acceptation of the term—that would be poor flattery to you, my child; but you are of that small number of privileged beings, who are born to speak, even before a Queen, language that would charm and make her love you, and to whisper to a poor, debased and abandoned creature redeeming and consoling words of comfort, that make her idolize you."

"My kind father, for pity's sake—"

"I cannot avoid it, Mademoiselle—I must speak out, for too long has my heart been overcharged. Only imagine my dread of awakening your recollections of the past—recollections which I wished to destroy and annihilate for ever—I did not dare to speak to you of these comparisons, which render you so adorable in my eyes. How frequently have Clemence and myself been enraptured when speaking of your qualities—how often, while tears sprang to her eyes, has she said to me, 'Is it not marvellous that this dear child should be what she now is, after the miseries she has endured—or rather,' continued Clemence, 'is it not marvellous that misfortune, so far from corrupting her rare and noble nature, has given greater scope to all that was excellent and good.'"

At this moment the door of the saloon was opened, and Clemence, Grand Duchess of Gerolstein, entered, holding a letter in her hand.

"Here, my friend," said she to Rodolphe, "is a letter from France. I chose to bring it to you myself that I might say good

morrow to my lazy child, whom I have not seen this morning." added Clemence, embracing Fleur de Marie very tenderly.

"This letter arrives most opportunely," said Rodolphe, gayly, after hastily perusing it; "we were just speaking of the past—of that monster whom we must resolve incessantly to combat, my dear Clemence, for it menaces the tranquillity and happiness of our child."

"Can it be true, my friend? those melancholy musings which we have remarked—"

"Had no other cause than unhappy remembrances; but fortunately we now know our enemy, and will triumph over him."

"But from whom comes this letter, my friend?" asked Clemence.

"From the pretty Rigolette—Germain's wife."

"Rigolette!" exclaimed Fleur de Marie, "how delightful it is to hear from her."

"My friend," said Clemence, whispering to Rodolphe, and with a glance directing his attention to Fleur de Marie, "are you not afraid that this letter may recall painful ideas to her mind?"

"It is these very painful ideas that I intend to destroy, my dear Clemence; we must boldly meet them—and I am sure of finding powerful weapons against them in this letter from Rigolette; for that excellent little creature adored our child, and duly appreciated her character."

And Rodolphe read aloud the following letter:

FARM OF BOUQUEVAL, 15th August, 1841.

MY LORD: I take the liberty of writing to you again, to inform you of the great happiness which has befallen us, and to beg a new favor of you—*of you*, to whom we already owe so much; or rather, to whom we owe the real paradise in which I, Germain and his good mother are now living.

What I have to tell you, my lord, is, that I have been almost beside myself with joy for the last ten days: for it is just ten days since I had a little girl, a perfect little love. As for myself, I think she is the complete image of Germain; he insists that she is like me. Our dear Madam Georges says that she is like us both. The fact is, she has charming blue eyes, like Germain's, and black curly hair, like mine. But there is one thing in which my husband does not play fair: he always will have our little one on his own knee; whereas, I say that it is my right to have her. Is it not so, my lord?

"Excellent, worthy people; how happy they must be," said Rodolphe. "If ever there was a well-matched couple, they are so."

"And how deserving Rigolette is of her happiness," said Fleur de Marie.

"I have always blessed the chance which led me to them," said Rodolphe; and then continued reading the letter.

But, really, my lord, I beg your pardon for mentioning these little gentle family quarrels, which always end with a kiss. Moreover, your ears must often tingle, my lord, for not a day passes over our heads, without our saying to one another, we two Germains, "Are we not happy? oh, God! are we not happy?" and your name comes naturally to our lips immediately after these words. Pray forgive the scratching you find here, my lord, and the blot I have made; for I had, without thinking, written *Mr. Rodolphe*, as I used to say formerly, and I have scratched it out. I hope, with regard to that, you will find my writing much improved, as well as my spelling; for Germain continues teaching me, and I do not make the great pot-hooks and hangers, straggling all over the paper as I did when you used to mend my pens.

"I must confess," said Rodolphe, laughing, "that my little protegé rather deceives herself; and I am certain that Germain amuses himself much oftener with kissing the hand of his pupil, than directing it."

"Come, come, my friend, you are unjust," said Clemence, looking at the letter; "the writing is rather large, but very legible."

"She certainly has made some progress," rejoined Rodolphe. "Formerly it would have taken eight pages to contain what she has now written in four;" and he went on reading.

It is, however, true, that you mended pens for me, my lord. When we think of it, we two Germains, we feel quite ashamed, that you should have had so little pride. But, good gracious! I find that I am still talking to you of everything but what we want to ask of you, my lord: for my husband unites with me in the petition; and it is a very important matter: we attach a religious feeling to it. You shall see.

We entreat you, my lord, to have the goodness to select for us, and give us a name for our darling little daughter; it is agreed upon with the godfather and godmother, and do you know who they are, my lord? Two persons whom you and the Marchioness d'Harville rescued from misery to make them happy, happy as we ourselves are. In a word, it is Morel the lapidary, and Jeanne Duport, the sister of a poor prisoner nicknamed Pique Vinaigre, a worthy woman, whom I saw in prison when I used to visit my poor Germain, and whom the Marchioness afterward released from the hospital.

Now, my lord, I must tell you why we have chosen Mr. Morel for godfather and Jeanne Duport for godmother. We said to one another, we two Germains, it will be like thanking Mr. Rodolphe again for his goodness to us, to choose as godfather and godmother for our little girl, worthy people who owe all they have to him and to the Marchioness, without at all considering that, besides this, Morel the lapidary and Jeanne Duport are the cream of honest people: they are of our own class, and moreover, as Germain and I say, they are *our relations in happiness*, because they belong to the *family of your protégés*, my lord

"Oh! my father! do you not think this idea full of charming delicacy," said Fleur de Marie with sweet emotion, "to select as godfather and godmother for their child persons who owe all to you and to my second mother."

"You are right, dear child," said Clemence. "I am much moved by this remembrance."

"And I am most happy in having so well bestowed my charity," said Rodolphe, continuing the letter

Moreover, by means of the money which you sent to him, Mr. Rodolphe, Morel is now a diamond broker; he earns sufficient to bring up his family comfortably, and to put his children out to some business. Poor Louise is going, I believe, to be married to a worthy mechanic, who loves and respects her as she deserves, for she has been very unfortunate, but not criminal, and the intended husband of Louise has heart enough to understand that.

"I was quite sure," exclaimed Rodolphe, addressing his daughter, "of finding in this letter of that dear little Rigolette, some weapons of defence against our enemy! You hear; this is an expression emanating from the plain good sense of an honest and right-thinking soul. She says of Louise, "*She has been unfortunate but not criminal, and her intended husband has heart enough to understand that.*"

Fleur de Marie, more and more moved and afflicted by the reading of this letter, seemed to shudder under the look which her father momentarily cast upon her, as he pronounced the words we have emphasized.

The prince continued.

I will also inform you, my lord, that Jeanne Duport—thanks to the generosity of the marchioness—has succeeded in getting a separation from her husband, that brute of a man who spent everything she had, and beat her also; she has taken back her eldest daughter to live with her, and keeps a little embroidery shop, where she sells what she and her children make; their business prospers. And there are not many people who are happier, and for that, thanks to my lord, thanks to the Marchioness, who both know so well how to bestow, and how to bestow at the proper time.

But speaking of that, Germain will write you as usual, my lord, at the end of the month, on the subject of the *Bank for laborers without work and gratuitous loans;* it is seldom that the repayments are not punctual, and people already acknowledge the comfort which it has spread in the district. Now, at all events, poor families can get through the dead season without sending their linen or their mattresses to the pawnbroker. And then, when works begins to come in again, you should see with what heart they set about it; they are so proud that confidence has been placed in their ability to work, and in their honesty: they have nothing else. And how they bless you for getting them loans upon it. Yes, my lord, they bless you, *you:* for whatever you may please to say, to deny that you had nothing to do with that establishment, save the appointing of Germain as directing cash-keeper, and that it is an unknown person who has done this great good, we all choose to believe that it is yourself: it is more natural!

Moreover, there is a famous trumpeter, who proclaims at the corner of every alley and street that it is you we ought to bless: this trumpeter is Madame Pipelet, who is constantly telling everybody that it is only her king of tenants (pray forgive me, Mr. Rodolphe, but she always calls you so) who can have done this charitable work; and her old dear Alfred is always of her opinion. As to him, he is so proud and so happy with his office of porter of the bank, that he says the persecutions of Mr. Cabrion would be now perfectly indifferent to him. To come to an end of your family of grateful hearts, my lord, I will add that Germain read in one of the newspapers that a man named Martial, a colonist in Algeria, had been mentioned with great praise for the courage

which he had shown in repelling, at the head of his farm laborers, an attack of Arabian plunderers, and that his wife, as intrepid as himself, had been wounded by his side, when she was firing upon the pillagers like a true grenadier. Since that time, says the newspapers, she has been christened Madame Carbine.

Excuse this long letter, my lord; but I thought that it would not be displeasing to you to hear news about all those to whom you have been a Providence. I write to you from the farm of Bouqueval, where we have been living since the Spring with our dear mother. Germain starts early in the morning to his business, and returns in the evening. In the autumn, we shall go back to Paris to live there. How droll it is, Mr. Rodolphe, that I, who did not like the country, now adore it. I explain this to myself by thinking it is because Germain is so fond of it. Speaking of the farm, Mr. Rodolphe, you who, no doubt, know what has become of that good little Goualeuse, if you have an opportunity, pray tell her that we all remember her, that we always think of her as the sweetest and best creature in the world, and that, as to myself, I never think of our own good fortune without saying to myself, as Mr. Rodolphe was also the Mr. Rodolphe of that dear Fleur de Marie, thanks to him, she must be happy as we are; and that makes me think my own happiness so much the greater.

Good gracious! how I am prattling away! What will you think of me, my lord? but ah! you are so good, and besides, do you see? it is your own fault if I prattle as much as father Cretu and Ramonette, who no longer dare venture to strive against me in singing. Ah! Mr. Rodolphe, I cut out work enough for them, I promise you.

You will not refuse our request, will you, my lord? If you give a name to our dear little child, it appears to us it would insure her happiness, that it would be her fortunate star. Sometimes, Mr. Rodolphe, I and my good Germain almost congratulate ourselves upon having known trouble, because, we feel doubly how blest our child will be in not being exposed to the misery through which we have passed.

If I conclude by telling you, Mr. Rodolphe, that we endeavor to relieve the poor people of our neighborhood according to our means, it is not that we mean to boast of it, but that you may know that we do not keep to ourselves all the happiness which you have given us; moreover, we always say to those we assist, it is not we whom you must thank and bless—it is Mr. Rodolphe, the best, the most generous man upon earth; and they consider you a saint, if not something more.

Adieu, my lord; be assured that when our little daughter first begins to spell, the first word she shall read will be your name, Mr. Rodolphe; and the next shall be those words which you had inscribed upon my wedding present—"*Labor and prudence—honor and happiness.*"

Thanks to these four words. To our tenderness and our care we hope, my lord, will be always worthy to pronounce the name of him who has been to us a Providence, as to all the unfortunate whom he has known.

Pardon me, my lord, but in concluding this my eyes are full of tears; but they are good tears—excuse this scrawl if you please—it is not my fault; but I can no longer see clearly, and my pen goes badly.

I have the honor, my lord, to salute you with as much respect as gratitude,

RIGOLETTE GERMAIN.

P. S. Oh, heaven! what have I done, my lord! I see, on reading over my letter, that I have several times written *Mr. Rodolphe*. You will forgive me, will you not? Be assured that by whatever name you are called, we equally respect and bless you, my lord.

CHAPTER III. .... RECOLLECTIONS.

"DEAR little Rigolette!" said Clemence, much affected by the letter Rodolphe had just read, "her style is plain, but it abounds in feeling."

"I could not have found a person more worthy of my interest," observed Rodolphe; "our *protegé* is gifted with a most excellent nature, a heart of gold; and our dear child appreciates her as we do," he added, turning to his daughter, but struck with her pallid and agitated looks, he exclaimed, "are you ill, my child?"

"Alas! the contrast between my position and that of Rigolette, is most painful to me. *Labor and prudence—honor and happiness!* these four little words express all that she has been—all that she will be during life. When a young girl, she was industrious and prudent, and now she is beloved as a wife, happy as a mother, and honored as a woman—such is her destiny; while I!——"

"Gracious heaven! what are you saying?"

"Pardon, dear father; accuse me not of ingratitude, but in spite of your unalterable tenderness, and the affection of my second mother, in spite of all the splendors and honors by which I am surrounded, and your own sovereign power, my shame is irremediable—nothing can obliterate the past. Again I entreat your pardon. Oh! my father! till this moment I have concealed the dreadful truth; but the remembrance of my former degradation almost maddens me—it is killing me."

"Do you hear her, Clemence!" exclaimed Rodolphe, almost frantically.

"Unhappy child!" said Clemence affectionately, taking Fleur de Marie's hand, "does not our tenderness, the affection of all who surround you, which you well deserve—does not all this convince you that you ought to look upon the past as a mere idle and frightful dream?"

"Oh! fate! fate!" rejoined Rodolphe, "I now curse my coward fears, my silence; this fatal thought so long rooted in her mind, has made most frightful ravages without our even suspecting its existence, and it is now too late to overcome the fatal error. How unhappy am I!"

"Courage, my dearest," said Clemence to Rodolphe; "you said but now, 'tis better to know the enemy who threatens us. The cause of our dear child's unhappiness is now revealed to us, and we shall overcome it; for we have reason, justice and affection on our side."

"And she must know, should her affliction prove incurable, that ours would become so too," rejoined Rodolphe, "for it would make one doubt all justice, human and divine, should this unhappy girl have merely changed one species of affliction for another."

After a silence of some minutes, during which Fleur de Marie seemed deeply meditating, she took one hand of Rodolphe, and one hand of Clemence, and said to them in a voice profoundly agitated,

"Hear me, my dear father, and you my tender mother: this is a solemn day. It is the will of God, and I humbly thank him that I am no longer able to conceal my sufferings from you. But I could not long have withheld the confession I am about to make, for all sufferings must have their end; and, however hidden mine have been, I could not much longer have withheld my secret from you."

"Ah! I understand it all," exclaimed Rodolphe, "all hope is now destroyed."

"My hope is in the future, my father, and that hope gives me the strength to speak to you as I do."

"And what hope can you have in the future, unhappy child, when your present brilliant position brings you only sorrow and bitterness?"

"I will tell you, my father, but before doing so permit me to recal the past, to confess to you and before God, who hears me, all that I have felt."

"Speak, speak, we are listening to you," said Rodolphe, sitting down with Clemence near Fleur de Marie.

"So long as I remained in Paris in your house, my father," said Fleur de Marie, "I was so happy, oh! so superlatively happy, that those days would not be too dearly recompensed by years of suffering: you therefore see, that at least I *have* known happiness."

"But during only a few days—"

"Yes; but what pure and unmixed delight! You encompassed me, as you have ever done, with the most tender cares! I abandoned myself, without apprehension, to the transports of gratitude and affection with which my heart beat toward you. The future dazzled me: I had a father to adore—a second mother, worthy of all my regard; for she was to replace mine, whom I had never known: and besides, (for I must confess everything,) my pride, even in spite of myself, exulted in the honor of belonging to you. Whenever any of the few persons who formed your household in Paris, had occasion to address me, they called me your Highness: I could not avoid being proud of this title. When I sometimes vaguely recurred to the past, it was to say to myself, 'I, who was formerly so debased, and so degraded, am now the daughter of a sovereign Prince, whom all men revere and bless. I, once so unfortunate, enjoy all the luxuries and splendors of an almost royal existence!' Alas! how could it be otherwise? My good fortune was so unforeseen—it came upon me so suddenly; your great rank environed me with such dazzling splendor, that my being blinded by it was, perhaps, excusable."

"Excusable! What could be more natural, my poor, beloved angel? How could it be culpable, to feel proud of a rank which was your right? to enjoy the advantages of a position to which I had restored you? I well remember that, in those happy days, your gayety was enchanting. How often did you then throw yourself into my arms, apparently overcome with happiness, exclaiming, in those merry, bewitching accents, 'I am destined no more to harm! My father, this is too much—too much happi-

ness!' It is these remembrances which have unfortunately lulled me into a deceitful security: and I did not afterward sufficiently inquire into the causes of your melancholy."

"But tell me, my child," said Clemence, "what fatal cause has changed a joy so pure, so legitimate as you then experienced, to such bitter sorrow?"

"Alas! a most fatal and unforeseen circumstance!"

"What circumstance?"

"Do you remember, my father!" said Fleur de Marie, shuddering with horror, "do you remember the terrible scene which preceded our departure from Paris, when your carriage was stopped near the Barriere?"

"Yes," replied Rodolphe, sorrowfully. "Brave Chourineur! after having saved my life a second time, he died—there—before our eyes, saying, 'Heaven is just—I *have* murdered—I *am* murdered.'"

"Well! at the moment that unhappy man expired, do you know whom I saw looking steadfastly at me? Oh! that look—that look—it has haunted me ever since," said Fleur de Marie, shuddering,

"What look? of whom do you speak?" cried Rodolphe.

"Of the *Ogress of the Tapis Franc*," murmured Fleur de Marie.

"That monster! where was it that you saw her?"

"You did not recognize her, then—in the tavern where Chourineur died; she was among the women who surrounded him."

"Ah! now," said Rodolphe, with great emotion, "I understand. Already struck with horror at the murder of Chourineur, you conceived there was something providential in this dreadful meeting."

"It is but too true, my father; on seeing the Ogress, a mortal coldness pervaded every sense; under her withering look, my heart, which until then was teeming with happiness and hope, froze in an instant. Yes, the meeting with that woman, at the moment Chourineur expired, exclaiming '*Heaven is just!*' appeared to me as a reproach from Heaven for my presumptuous oblivion of the past; and this presumption I ought to expiate by humiliation and repentance."

"You could not be accountable to heaven for what had passed; all you had done was by compulsion—you were helpless, overpowered, unhappy child. Once precipitated into that abyss, escape from it was impossible, notwithstanding your compunction, your alarm, your despair; thanks to the atrocious indifference of that society of which you were the victim. You felt yourself for ever enchained in that den; nothing but chance, which threw you in my way, could have released you from it."

"And then, my child," rejoined Clemence, "as your father tells you, you were the victim, and not the accomplice in this infamy."

"But that infamy—I have undergone it, my mother," replied Fleur de Marie, with a mournful shudder, "nothing can destroy these frightful recollections—they unceasingly pursue me, not as heretofore among the peaceful inhabitants of a farm, or the degraded women who were my companions in Saint Lazare—but they pursue me in this palace, inhabited by the first of the land; they pursue me even when in the arms of my father—even upon the steps of his throne."

And Fleur de Marie burst into tears.

Rodolphe and Clemence remained mute before this fearful expression of unquenchable remorse; they also wept, for they felt the impotency of their consolations.

"From that time," said Fleur de Marie, wiping away her tears, "I am constantly saying to myself, 'I am honored, I am revered—the most eminent, the most honorable persons of the State shower their attentions upon me; before the whole court the sister of an Emperor deigned to fasten a bandeau on my forehead—and I that have lived amid the scum of the *Cité*, the companion of robbers and assassins!' Oh! my father, forgive me; but the more elevated my station the more severely do I feel the profound degradation into which I had fallen; when any new homage is paid to me, I feel myself guilty of profanation. Think then of this; after being *what I have been*, that young and noble ladies, that mothers of families, respected for their virtues, should consider themselves flattered in being permitted to approach me; that princesses, rendered doubly venerable by age and their sacerdotal character, should heap kindness and praises upon me! is it not impious and sacrilegious? And then, again, did you but know, my father, what I have suffered, what I still suffer daily, when I ask myself, 'Should it please God to make known the past, with what deserved disdain would they not look on her, whom now they elevate so high!' How just though terrible a retribution!"

"But, unhappy child, my wife and I know all that has befallen you; we are worthy of the rank we bear, and yet we love you dearly—we adore you."

"Your doting fondness for me prevents your seeing—"

"And all the good you have done since your arrival here? that holy and beautiful institution founded by you as an asylum for orphan girls, and for young girls abandoned by their parents; the admirable wisdom you have evinced in the regulations laid down for their protection and improvement; your insisting upon calling them *your sisters*, and that they should address you by the same endearing application; and you, in fact, have treated them as sisters. Is this nothing for the redemption of errors which never were your own? And the affection evinced toward you by the worthy Abbess de St. Hermangilde, who did not know you till your arrival here—do you not owe it solely to your elevation of mind, to your sincere piety?"

"So long as the Abbess of St. Hermangilde bestows her praises upon my present conduct, I rejoice in them without scruple; but, when she cites me as an example for the young and noble ladies who study religion in the Abbey—when they look to me as to a model of all the virtues, I am overwhelmed with confusion, and consider myself an accomplice in an unworthy falsehood."

After a long silence, Rodolphe, with sorrowful despondency, continued:

"I see we must despair of bringing conviction to your mind; all reasoning is powerless against a conviction, the more unmovable because founded on a just and elevated sentiment. By reverting incessantly to the past, the contrast between your recollections and your present position, cannot but prove a constant state of torment. Pardon, my child; it is for me now to ask your forgiveness."

"You, my dear father! Forgiveness from me! and, gracious Heaven! for what?"

"Not to have foreseen your susceptibility. From the excessive delicacy of your mind, I ought to have foreseen it. I thought it my duty to formally acknowledge you as my daughter: this reverence, this homage, which is so painful to you, has necessarily been paid to you. But I was in error: I was too proud of you: I wished to witness the influence which your beauty, your understanding, your character, exercised upon all who approached you. I ought to have hid my treasure—to have lived almost in retirement with Clemence and yourself—to have renounced those fêtes, those great assemblies in which I loved to see you shine—thinking madly to raise you to such a height, that the past would disappear entirely. But, alas! it has produced the contrary effect; and, as you have told me, the higher your elevation, the more gloomy and profound appears the abyss from which I have withdrawn you, Again I repeat, mine has been the error. And yet, I thought that I was acting wisely," said Rodolphe, wiping away his tears, "but I deceived myself. Too early I imagined my own faults were pardoned: the vengeance of God is not yet satisfied: it still pursues me by destroying the happiness of my child!"

At this moment, a few slight taps given at the door of the room which communicated with the oratory, interrupted this sorrowful conversation.

Rodolphe rose, and, half-opening the door, he saw Murph, who said—

"I beg your royal Highness' pardon for interrupting you; but a courier has just arrived from the Prince of Herkausen Oldenzaal, bringing this letter, which he says is of great importance, and should be delivered instantly to your royal Highness."

"Thanks, my good Murph; remain somewhere at hand," said Rodolphe, sighing, "I shall want to speak with you presently."

The Prince, having shut the door, remained for some minutes in the ante-room, reading the letter which Murph had brought him. It was conceived in the following terms:

"My lord: May I hope that the ties of kindred which attach me to your royal Highness, and the friendship with which you have always deigned to honor me, will excuse a step which did not my duty as an honest man impel me to it, might be considered as a great temerity.

It is now fifteen months ago that you, my lord, returned from France, bringing with you a daughter, more beloved because you had thought her lost to you for ever, while on the contrary she had never left her mother, whom you had married at Paris, *in extremis*, in order to legitimate the birth of the Princess Amelia, who then became the equal of the other Princesses of the Germanic Confederation.

Her birth is, therefore, royal, her beauty incomparable; her heart is as worthy of her birth as her understanding is of her beauty. My sister, the Abbess of Hermangilde, who had frequently the honor of seeing the well-beloved daughter of your royal Highness, has, by letter, informed me of these facts.

I shall now, my lord, frankly state the object of this letter;

for a serious illness detains me at Oldenzaal, and prevents me from waiting in person upon your royal Highness.

During the time which my son passed at Gerolstein, he saw the Princess Amelia almost daily: he passionately loves her; but from her he has always concealed his love.

I have thought it my duty to inform you of it, my lord. You deigned to receive my son with paternal affection, and to invite him to return, to reside in the bosom of your family with that intimacy which is so precious to him. I should have basely forfeited my good faith, had I withheld from your highness the knowledge of a circumstance which might modify the welcome which you intended for my son.

I know that it would be folly in us to hope to be allied more nearly than we are, to the family of your royal highness.

I know that your daughter, of whom your royal highness is so justly proud, may lay claim to a high destiny.

But I know also that you are the most affectionate of fathers, and that, should you think my son worthy to belong to your family, and that he would render the Princess Amelia happy, your consent would not be withheld on account of the serious disproportions, which make such happiness almost unhoped for on our part.

It would ill befit me to enter into my praise of Henry; but my lord, I appeal to the encouragement and approbation which you so often deigned to bestow upon him.

I dare not, and I cannot say more, my lord; my emotions are too profound.

Whatever may be your determination, deign to believe that we shall submit to it with respect, and that I shall always remain faithful to the sentiments of profound devotion, with which I have the the honor to be

Your royal Highness's
Very humble and obedient servant,
GUSTAVE PAUL.

CHAPTER IV. ..... CONFESSIONS.

AFTER reading the letter of the Prince, Henry's father, Rodolphe remained some time sorrowful and pensive, and then a ray of hope, brightening his brow, he returned to his daughter on whom Clemence had in vain been lavishing her consolations.

"My child, you have yourself told us that God has ordered that this should be a day of solemn explanation," said Rodolphe, to Fleur de Marie. "I did not foresee that an entirely new and important circumstance would have justified your words."

"To what does it relate, my father?"

"What is it, my friend?" asked Clemence.

"New subjects of apprehension."

"For whom, then my father?"

"For you."

"For me?"

"You have only acknowledged to us half your sorrows, my poor child."

"Be good enough to explain yourself, my father."

"I can do so now: I could not do so earlier, for I was then ignorant that you despaired so utterly of your father. Listen, my beloved child; you believe yourself to be—or rather, you are most unhappy. When at the commencement of our conversation, you spoke of still remaining hopes, I understood; my heart was broken, for I was threatened with losing you forever; with seeing you entering a cloister, descending into a living tomb. You wish to retire to a convent?"

"My father!"

"Is it not true, my child?"

"Yes, if you will permit it;" replied Fleur de Marie, in a voice nearly suffocated with emotions.

"You would leave us?" said Clemence.

"The Abbey of Saint Hermangilde, is not far distant from Gerolstein: I should see you often, you and my father."

"Consider, my child, such vows are eternal; you are but eighteen years old, and perhaps, hereafter ——"

"Oh! I should never repent my resolution; in the solitude of the cloister only, shall I find repose and forgetfulness, provided you, my father, and you, my second mother, continue your affection for me."

"The duties, the consolations of a religious life, might indeed," said Rodolphe, "cure or alleviate at least, thy poor distressed and wounded soul. And although half the happiness of my life would be destroyed by it, I might be led to approve your resolutions. I know how poignantly you suffer, and I do not say that a renouncement of the world might not be the term of your sorrowful existence."

"How! you too, Rodolphe?" exclaimed Clemence.

"Permit me, my friend, to explain my meaning," replied Rodolphe; and then, addressing his daughter, "But before taking this extreme determination, we must examine if another destiny would not accord much better with your wishes and with ours. In such a case there is no sacrifice I would not make to assure you such a destiny."

Fleur de Marie and Clemence both, made a gesture of surprise; Rodolphe looking earnestly at his daughter, continued:

"What think you of your cousin, the Prince Henry?"

Fleur de Marie started, and blushed deeply, and then after a moment's hesitation, threw herself weeping into the arms of her father.

"You love him, my poor child."

"You never before asked me if I did, my father," replied Fleur de Marie, wiping away her tears.

"My dear, we are not deceived," said Clemence.

"Then you love him," added Rodolphe, taking his daughter's hands in his own; "you love him, my darling child."

"Oh, if you knew," replied Fleur de Marie, "what it has cost me to hide this sentiment from you since I became aware of its existence in my heart. Alas! at the least interrogation from yourself, I should have avowed it to you, but shame restrained me, and would always have kept me silent."

"And do you think that Henry is conscious of your love for him?"

"Good Heavens! my father, I do not think it," said Fleur de Marie, in affright.

"And Henry, do you believe that he loves you?"

"No, my father, no. Oh, I hope not; he will suffer too much."

"And how did your love begin, my angel?"

"Alas! almost unconsciously. You remember the portrait of the page?"

"That in the apartment of the Abbess of Saint Hermengilde? it is Henry's portrait."

"Yes, my father: believing it to be an old painting, I one day in your presence, confessed to the Superior that I was struck with the beauty of the portrait. You then jestingly told me that 'this was the portrait of one of our ancestors, who, while very young, had manifested great courage and many excellent qualities.' The agreeableness of the face, in connection with what you told me of the noble character of this ancestor, augmented my first impression. From that day, I have often delighted to dwell upon that portrait, and I have done so without scruple, believing that my tenderness was wasted upon a cousin, long since dead. Little by little I accustomed myself, I became habituated to these sweet thoughts; knowing that I was not permitted to love on this earth," added Fleur de Marie, with a heart-broken expression, and weeping still more bitterly, "I took a kind of melancholy interest in these strange reveries, half-joyous, half-sorrowful as they were; I looked upon this pretty page of the olden time, as my betrothed one beyond the tomb, whom I should one day find in the realms of eternity. I thought that such was the only love worthy of a heart which belonged wholly to yourself, my father. I pray you pardon this sad childishness."

"Nothing could touch me more, poor child," said Clemence, deeply moved.

"Now," said Rodolphe, "I understand why you once, with a sorrowful air, reproached me for having deceived you with regard to that portrait."

"Yes, my father; judge of my confusion when sometime afterward, the Abbess informed me the portrait was that of her nephew, one of our kindred. Then my trouble was extreme. I tried to forget my first impressions; but the more I tried, the deeper they took root in my heart, and grew more firmly from the very constancy of my efforts to remove them; and, still more unhappily for me, I often heard you praise the heart, the mind, the character of Prince Henry."

"You loved him, then, when you had only seen his portrait and heard the praise of his rare qualities?"

"Without loving him, my father, I felt an attachment for him for which I bitterly reproached myself, but I consoled myself with the reflection that nobody in the world knew the sad secret, which so covered me with shame in my own eyes. For me to dare to love! me! me! Not to content myself with your tenderness and that of my second mother! Ought I not to expend all the fervor, all the resources of my heart in loving you alone? Oh, believe me, of all my self-reproaches, this is the most bitter! At length I saw my cousin for the first time, at the grand fête you gave to the Archduchess Sophia; Prince Henry bore so striking a resemblance to his portrait, that I knew him immediately. On that very evening, you presented my cousin to me, and authorized that intimacy between us which consanguinity allows."

"And you soon loved each other."

"Ah! my father, he expressed his respect, his attachment, his admiration, with so much eloquence—and you had yourself said so much in his praise!"

"He deserved it. I know of no character more lofty; no better or manlier heart."

"I entreat you, father, do not praise him thus. I am already wretched enough."

"I am determined to convince you of all the rare qualities of your cousin. What I say surprises you. I understand it, my daughter: go on."

"I knew the danger I incurred by so constant an intercourse with the Prince; but I could not flee from it. Notwithstanding my absolute confidence in you, dear father, I dared not confess my fears. I summoned all my courage to conceal my fondness; for I acknowledge, dear father, that, in spite of my remorse, I was forgetful of the past, in our daily and familiar intercourse, and tasted of happiness that I had never known before. Alas! it was but the forerunner of a keener anguish, and I sank once more under the weight of my sad remembrances. Ah! if they were my constant attendants amid the homage and attentions of people, almost indifferent to me—judge, judge, dear father, what must have been my tortures while the Prince lavished upon me his prodigal, and yet most delicate praises—circling me about with a high and holy adoration, and devoting his fraternal love to the sainted protection of that mother, whom he had so early lost. I strove to merit the sweet name of sister, at least, by counseling my cousin as to his future career, according to my small ability, by interesting myself in all that concerned him, and by promising myself that I would for ever solicit for him your guardian care. But how severe were my torments, how abundant my tears, when Prince Henry chanced to question me about my infancy, my early youth! What! to deceive! always to deceive! always to fear! always to falsify! always to tremble under the glance of one whom we love and respect—as trembles the criminal before the inexorable eye of his judge! Dear father, I was guilty, I know it. I had no right to love him—but then I expiated this sad love by so much sorrow! What am I saying? The departure of Prince Henry, by causing a new and violent grief, enlightened my mind; I saw that I loved him, more than I had thought. And very soon," added Fleur de Marie, as if this confession had exhausted all her strength, "very soon would I have revealed it to you; for this fatal love had filled the measure of my afflictions. Tell me, dear father, now that you know all, can there be any other future for me than the cloister?"

"There is another, my child; and that future is as sweet, as smiling, and as happy as the convent is gloomy and dismal."

"Father! what do you say?"

"Now, listen to me. You well know that I love you too dearly, that my tenderness is too clear-sighted, not to have discerned the mutual affection of Henry and yourself. In a few days I was sure that he loved you, even more than he was beloved."

"Father! no, no! it is impossible; he could never love me thus."

"He loves you! passionately, madly loves you!"

"Oh, my God! my God!"

"Listen further. When I indulged in that pleasantry about the portrait, I was not aware that Henry was so soon to visit his aunt at Gerolstein. When he came, I gave way to the partiality which he always inspired, and invited him to visit us often. Till then, I had always treated him as a son, and I did not in the least change my conduct toward him. After a few days, Clemence and I could not doubt the mutual affection which you felt for one another. If your position was an unhappy one, my child, mine was most painful, and, moreover, one of extreme delicacy. As a father, knowing the rare and excellent qualities of Henry, I could not be otherwise than profoundly happy at your attachment; for never could I have imagined a husband more worthy of you."

"Ah! my father, have pity! have pity on me!"

"But, as a man of honor, I reflected on the mournful past of my child; and, far from encouraging the hopes of Henry, I gave him, in many of our conversations, advice directly contrary to what I should have given, had I thought of granting him your hand. In circumstances so delicate, it became me, both as a father and a man of honor, to observe a strict neutrality; not to encourage in the least your cousin's love, but to treat him with the same affability as of old. You have, my darling, been so unhappy, that when I beheld you under the influence of this pure and noble affection, I could not bear to rend from you these strange, divine delights. Admitting, even, that your dream must sooner or later be broken, you would taste some moments of innocent joy. And now, after all, this love will assure your future repose."

"My repose!"

"Still further. Henry's father, the Prince Paul, has written to me. Here is his letter. Though he regards the alliance as an unhoped for favor, he asks your hand for his son, who, he tells me, entertains for you the most respectful, the most passionate love."

"Oh, Heaven!" cried Fleur de Marie, hiding her face in her hands. "I might have been so happy!"

"Courage, my well-beloved," tenderly exclaimed Rodolphe. "If you desire it, this happiness shall be yours."

"Oh, never! never! do you forget!"

"I forget nothing. I but remember that, instead of your entering a convent to-morrow, where I should not only lose you for ever, but where you would be consigned to grief and austerity, I shall part with you only to make you blest, as the wife of one whom you love, and who will cherish you as he ought!"

"His wife! *I* his wife!"

"But on the sole condition, that, after your marriage, contracted here, at night, with no other witnesses than Murph for yourself, and the Baron de Graün for Henry, you will set out for some tranquil retreat in Switzerland, or Italy, where you can live unknown, as private wealthy citizens. Now, my daughter, do you know how I have been able to resign myself to your departure? Do you know why I desire Henry to give up his title as soon as he shall leave Germany? It is because I am confident that in the midst of solitary happiness, passing your days far from all pomp and ceremony, you will, by degrees, learn to forget the hateful past, now so painful from the bitter contrast which it affords to the grandeur that surrounds you."

"Rodolphe is right," exclaimed Clemence. "Continually happy in his good fortune, as well as your own, you will no longer have any time to brood over former sorrows, my gentle one."

"And then, as it will be quite impossible for me to exist without seeing you; Clemence and myself will, every year, come and visit you."

"And, by-and-by, when the wound which now pains you shall be healed—when you have found oblivion in happiness—and that time will come sooner than you imagine—you can return, never to leave us more."

"Oblivion in happiness!" murmured Fleur de Marie, who had resigned herself to the power of the enchanting dream.

"Yes, yes, my child," said Clemence; "when every moment of your life you find yourself respected, blessed and adored by the husband of your choice; by the man whose generous and noble spirit your father has a thousand times commended—can you have leisure to revert to the past? And then, also, you will wonder how it was that the past could ever have afflicted you; how you could ever have hesitated to believe in the unclouded felicity of your husband?"

"It is indeed true—and tell me, my child," said Rodolphe, who could hardly restrain his tears of joy at seeing his daughter thus moved, "when you are conscious of the idolatry of your husband, and are convinced that to you he owes his happiness, how can you reproach yourself?"

"Father," said Fleur de Marie, oblivious of the past, in her delicious hopes, "can it be possible that so much happiness is in reserve for me?"

"Ah! I am sure of it," cried Rodolphe, with a burst of triumphant joy. "What is there that a father will not do for the welfare of a daughter whom he adores?"

"She deserves so much, that we can well grant anything she desires," said Clemence, sharing the rapture of the Prince."

"Marry Henry, and pass my whole life with him, and my father, and my second mother!" repeated Fleur de Marie, yielding more and more to the sweet intoxication of her dream.

"Yes, my darling angel, we shall all be happy. I will instantly reply to Henry's father, and say that I consent to the marriage," said Rodolphe, clasping Fleur de Marie in his arms with unspeakable emotion. "Be calm, my dear, our separation will be transitory: the new duties, that marriage will enjoin will more closely keep you in that path of oblivion and happiness in which you will henceforth walk for ever; and, at last, when you shall become a mother, nothing will be wanting to complete your joy."

"Ah!" exclaimed Fleur de Marie, with a startling scream; for the word *mother* had awoke her from her lulling and enchanting dream. "Mother! me! oh, never! I am unworthy of the sacred name! I should die with shame, before my child, if I had not already died in the presence of its father, when I made to him a confession of the past——"

"Good Heaven! what do you say?" cried Rodolphe, frightened by this sudden change.

"I, a mother!" said Fleur de Marie, in the bitterness of her

despair; "I respected! I blessed with an innocent and unstained child! I! once the object of universal contempt! I to profane the sacred name of mother! oh, never! Miserable fool that I was, to yield myself to so unworthy a hope!"

"My daughter, have pity on me! Hear me!"

Fleur de Marie drew herself up to her full height, pale and beautiful, in the majesty of her incurable sorrow:

"My father, we forget that before we marry, Prince Henry must know the history of my past life."

"I have not forgotten it," said Rodolphe; "he ought to know it; he shall know it."

"And would you not rather that I should die than so degrade myself in his eyes?"

"But he will know that an irresistible fatality cast you into the abyss: he will know your reinstatement——"

"And he will feel also," said Clemence, "that since I call you my daughter, he ought not to be ashamed to call you his wife."

"Mother! I love, I esteem Prince Henry too much ever to give him my hand, that hand which has been defiled by the bandits of the Cite

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Shortly after this mournful scene, the following appeared in the official gazette of Gerolstein:

Yesterday, took place, in the Grand Ducal Abbey of Saint Hermangilde, in presence of his Royal Highness the reigning Grand Duke, and all his court, the ceremony of taking the veil, by the very high and puissant princess, her Highness Amelia of Gerolstein.

Her profession as novice, was received by the Very Illustrious and Very Reverend Monseigneur Charles Maxamil, Archbishop, Duke of Opperheim: and Monseigneur Annibal André of the Princes of Delphi; the Bishop of Ceuta, in partibus in fidelium and Apostolic Nuncio, gave her the kiss of peace and the papal benediction.

The Sermon was delivered by the Most Reverend Revard d'Asfeld, Canon of the Chapter of Cologne, and Count of the Sacred Roman Empire.

CHAPTER V. ..... THE PROFESSION.

RODOLPHE TO CLEMENCE.

GEROLSTEIN, JANUARY 12.*

From the news you have sent me to-day, of the recovery of your father, my dearest friend, you lead me to hope, that before the end of the week you may be enabled to bring him hither. I had warned him while residing at Rosenfold, situated as it is in the midst of vast forests, he would be exposed, in spite of every possible precaution, to the keen severity of your frosts. Unfortunately, his passion for hunting caused him to neglect my advice. I request you, Clemence, as soon as your father shall be able to endure the motion of his carriage, to set forth at once; leave that wild country, that wild dwelling-place, which is indeed habitable only by those antique, iron-limbed Germans, the very race of whom has vanished from the earth.

I am in constant terror lest you, too, should be taken ill. The fatigues of that hurried journey, the anxiety to which you must have been a prey, until you found yourself in the presence of your father, must all have had a cruel effect on your spirits. Alas! why was not I able to accompany you.

Clemence, I implore you, be guilty of no imprudence. I know how courageous you are, and how self-devoted. I know with what incessant care you will nurse the convalescence of your father. But he will be as much affected, even as I, should your health suffer during his journey. I regret doubly the count's illness, for it has hindered you from being with me, at a time when I should have derived deep consolation from your tenderness.

The ceremony of the *profession* of your poor child still remains fixed for to-morrow—for to-morrow, the 13th of January, that most fatal day. It was on the 13th of January that I drew my sword upon my father. Ah, my beloved, I imagined too soon that I had earned forgiveness of my crime. Alas! the intoxicating hope of passing my life with you and my child, led me to overlook the fact, that it was *she*, not I, who had been punished heretofore; and that my chastisement was yet to come.

It did come! when some six months ago the wretched girl revealed to us the double torture of the heart which she was undergoing. *Her hopeless shame inspired by her past life, joined to her hapless love for Henry.*

These two bitter and burning passions, exaggerated each by the opposition of the other, necessarily, and, as it were, by a kind of fatal argument brought her to a determined resolution of taking the veil. You well know, my beloved, that even while we strove, with all the strength with which our mighty love for her inspired us, to persuade her from that sad design, we yet could not deny that her courageous conduct would have been ours also, in the like circumstances.

What answer could we make to those dreadful words—"*I love Henry too dearly to give to him a hand polluted by the touch of assassins.*"

It was her duty to sacrifice herself to her noble scruples, to the indelible consciousness of her disgrace. She has done gallantly—she has renounced the splendors of the world—she has descended the steps of a throne, to kneel clothed in serge on the pavement of a church. She has folded her hands on her bosom, bowed her angelic head—her beautiful ringlets, which I loved so dearly, and which I yet preserve as a treasure, have fallen beneath the fatal scissors.

Oh, my beloved, you know the terrible emotion which we felt on that melancholy solemn moment—that emotion is as keenly felt now, in my bosom, as at the very moment that excited it. Even as I write these words, I weep like a child.

I have seen her this morning, and although she appears less pale than usual, and insists that she has no suffering, her state of health alarms me terribly! Alas! when, under the veil and fillets which bind her noble brow, I saw that her emaciated features were as white and almost as cold as marble, making her large blue eyes appear larger, I cannot help dreaming of the pure and heavenly brilliance which lighted up her beauty at the hour of our marriage—never had we beheld, was it not so, Clemence? a vision more enchanting. Our happiness appeared to be reflected by her radiant features.

"As I just told you, I have seen her this morning. She has not yet been informed, that the Princess Julianne deposes herself voluntarily from her abbatial dignity in her favor. To-morrow, then, upon the very day of her profession, our child will be elected abbess. Never, it is said, has there been so perfect a unanimity among the noble damsels of the society, as there now is to confer on her this honor.*

From the commencement of her noviciate, there has been but one voice as to her piety, her chastity, her scrupulous exactness in the performance of all the rules of the Order, of which unfortunately she even exaggerates the severity.

She has exercised from the first in her convent, that influence which she exerts everywhere, without pretending to do so, and even without seeming to suspect her power, which by that very cause is doubled.

Her conversation of this morning has convinced me of what I feared before—that she has not found in the solitude of the cloister, in the severe practice of monastic life, that repose, that forgetfulness, of which she was in search. Nevertheless, she rejoices in her resolution, which she considers the accomplishment merely of an imperious duty. But she still suffers; for she was not born for the contemplation of those mystical ideas, in the midst of which some persons, forgetting all affections, all memories pertaining to this world, lose themselves in a sort of ascetic ravishment.

Yes! Fleur de Marie believes; she prays; she submits herself to the rigorous and harsh observances of her Order; she lavishes evangelical consolations—lavishes the most humble attentions upon the poor sick women who are patients in the hospital of the abbey. She has even refused the assistance of a lay sister for the arrangement of that sad cell, so bare and cold, and in which we were so deeply grieved and astonished to behold the dry dead branches of her favorite rose-tree hung up.

In one word, she is the beloved example, the venerated model of the whole society. But—she owned it to me this morning, reproaching herself bitterly for her weakness—she is not so much absorbed in the practice and the austerities of a religious life, but that the past is constantly before her mind, not only as it is, but as it might have been. "I blame myself for this, my father," she said, with sweet, calm resignation, which you must have observed in her—"I blame myself for this; but I cannot avoid thinking sometimes, if it had only pleased God to spare me the degradation which has blighted my future, how happily I could have lived with you, beloved by the husband of your choosing. In my own despite, my life is divided between these mournful regrets, and the fearful recollections of the Cite. In vain I implore God to deliver me from these visions which visit me; to fill my heart only with His pious love—His holy aspira-

* About six months had been passed since the entrance of Fleur de Marie into the Convent of St. Hermangilda, as a novice

* On some occasions, nuns have been elevated to the dignity of abbess on the very day of their profession. See "*The Life of the very high and very holy Princess Charlotte Blandrino de Nassau, very worthy abbess of the royal monastery of Saint Croix, who was elected abbess at the age of nineteen years.*

tions; to take me, in fact, to Himself all in all, since all in all I wish to give myself up to Him: He does not grant my wishes, doubtless, because my earthly preoccupations render me unworthy to enter into communion with Him."

"We are yet in time, then," exclaimed I; "your noviciate terminates to-day, and it is only to-morrow that your solemn profession of celibacy is to take place. You are still free; renounce this rude and austere life, which does not bring you the consolation you expected from it. If you must suffer, come to our arms to suffer, and our affection will mitigate your affliction."

Sorrowfully shaking her head, she replied to me with that inflexible force of reasoning, which has so often struck me with surprise:

"There is no doubt, my dear father, the solitude of the cloister must be gloomy to me; to me so long accustomed to your never-ceasing tenderness. Doubtless, I am still pursued by bitter regrets, by heart-rending recollections; but I feel I am at least fulfilling a great duty. I feel—I know, that this is now the only retreat befitting my condition; elsewhere, I should again find myself in that cruelly false position from which I have so much suffered, not only for myself but for you; for I have my pride also. Your daughter shall be what she ought to be; will act as your daughter should act; will suffer as she ought to suffer. To-morrow, all the world might know the filth from which you extricated me, and they would perhaps pardon me the past by virtue of my present humility. And it would not be so, my father, were they to see me as I was only a few months back, shining amid the splendor of your court. Moreover, in satisfying the severe and just requirements of society, I satisfy my own conscience; therefore, I thank God with all the fervor of which my soul is capable; when I reflect that it is He alone who can offer an asylum to your daughter, worthy of her and you—a position which will not form an afflicting contrast with my former degradation, and from which I may derive the only respect which is due to me—that respect which is granted to sincere repentance and humility."

Alas! Clemence! how could I answer this? Fatality! Fatality! for this unhappy child is gifted, if one may so express it, with an inflexible logic in all that regards delicacy of feeling, and of honor. With such an understanding, and such a soul, all attempts at palliation, or to turn a false position, would be vain. We can only submit to her implacable resolution.

I left her, as I always do, heart-broken, without having founded the slightest hope upon this interview; which will be our last before her *profession*. I had said to myself: "she may still renounce the cloister;" but, my friend, her determination is irrevocable, and I cannot, alas! do otherwise than agree with her in thinking "*that it is God alone who can offer her an asylum, and a position worthy of her and me.*"

Her resolution is admirably suitable and logical, as regards the state of society in which we live. With the exquisite susceptibility of Fleur de Marie, no other position could be compatible. But I have often told you, my dear friend, that, were it not for the sacred duties of my station, more sacred still than those of family affection, which retain me amid a people by whom I am beloved, and to whom I am in some wise a Providence, I should have fled with you, my daughter, Henry and Murph, to some undiscoverable retreat, and there have lived obscure and happy. There, far from the dominion of those imperious laws of a society, incapable of remedying the evils it has inflicted, we might have forced this unhappy child to enjoy happiness and forgetfulness. Whereas here, in the midst of this display, these courtly ceremonies, curtailed even as they might be, it would be impossible. Again, I repeat, fatality! fatality! I cannot abdicate my power, without compromising the welfare of a people who depend on me. Brave and worthy people—may they be ever ignorant of the sacrifices I am making for their happiness!

Adieu! tenderly adieu! my best beloved Clemence. It is almost a consolation to me to see you as much afflicted as myself by the fate of our poor child; for thus I can say *our* affliction, and there is no egotism in my sufferings.

Some times I ask myself with terror: what would have been my fate, deprived of you, in the midst of these appalling circumstances? and this reflection makes me feel more keenly the fate of our child, for you will still be near me. What remains to her? Henceforward she will be alone.

Once more, and sorrowfully, I say adieu! adieu! noble and tender friend; my good angel in the hour of affliction. Return soon to me; this absence must be as painful to you as it is to me.

To you I dedicate my life and love, heart and soul,

Yours, R.

I forward this letter by a courier; and to-morrow, unless some unforeseen change should happen, I will expedite another, immediately after the sorrowful ceremony. A thousand wishes and hopes to your father for his speedy convalescence. I had forgotten to speak to you of poor Henry; his health is improving, and the fears entertained for him are much quieted. His excellent father, although suffering himself from illness, summoned sufficient strength to watch over and sit up with him—a miracle of paternal love, but which does not surprise either you or me.

Farewell then, till to-morrow—to-morrow—to me a fatal and inauspicious day.

Again yours, for ever yours, R.

ABBEY OF SAINT HERMANGILDE,
4 o'clock in the morning.

Do not be alarmed, Clemence, do not be alarmed; although the hour and place in which this letter is written, must necessarily awaken your fears.

Thanks to God! the danger is now over; but the crisis has been terrible.

After having written to you yesterday, being agitated by I know not what fatal presentiment; recalling to mind the paleness, the too evident suffering of my child, the state of weakness under which she has languished for some time past; reflecting finally that she was about to pass the night, preceding her profession, in prayer, in an immense and ice-cold church, I sent Murph and David to the Abbey, to request the Princess Julianne would permit them to remain in the house without the Abbey-walls, in which Henry used to reside. By this arrangement, my daughter could obtain immediate medical assistance, and I could hear from her, if, as I feared, her strength should fail her before accomplishing this rigorous, I will not say cruel obligation, of remaining during a long and inclement January night, praying before the altar. I had also written to Fleur de Marie, that although respecting the exercise of her religious duties, I entreated her to be careful of her health, and to perform her vigils in her cell, and not within the church. This is the answer I received from her.

"MY DEAR FATHER,

"I thank you, from the bottom of my heart, for this new and tender proof of your affection; do not feel any apprehension on my account—I think I have strength sufficient to perform this duty. Your daughter's salvation, my dear father, cannot be attained by either fear or weakness—such are the regulations of the church, and to them I will conform. Should any physical sufferings ensue, it is with joy that I shall offer them to God. You will, I trust, approve my resolution, you, who have always practiced self-denial as a duty, with so much fortitude and courage. Farewell, my dear father—I will not say that I shall pray for you—in praying to God I always pray to you, for it is impossible not to confound you with the divinity I implore; you have been to me on earth, what God will, should I merit it, be to me in Heaven.

"Deign this night to bless your daughter with your thoughts, my dear father; to-morrow she will have become the bride of the Lord.

"She kisses your hand with pious respect.

"SISTER AMELIA."

This letter, which I could not read without bursting into tears, quieted me in some degree; I also was about to perform an inauspicious vigil.

When the night set in, I shut myself up in the pavilion, which I have had built, not far from the monument erected to the memory of my father, in expiation of that fatal night.

At about one o'clock, I heard the voice of Murph. I shuddered with alarm; he had come from the convent in great haste.

As I had anticipated, the unhappy child, notwithstanding her great courage and her decided will, had not the strength to accomplish fully this barbarous custom, and from which the Princess Julianne could not absolve her, the regulation being imperative in this particular.

At eight o'clock, Fleur de Marie knelt down on the cold stones, and continued praying until midnight; but at that hour, overcome by weakness, by the intense cold, by her emotions, for she had wept long and silently, she fell into a swoon. Two of the sisters, who, by order of the Princess Julianne, had assisted at her vigils, raised her from the pavement and carried her into her cell.

David was instantly summoned: Murph took a carriage, and hastened to me: I flew to the convent, where I was received by the Princess Julianne. She told me that David feared my presence might affect my daughter too strongly; that her fainting fit, from which she had recovered, did not give grounds for much alarm, having been caused by her great weakness.

At first, a dreadful idea took full possession of me. I thought

they wished to conceal a more frightful misfortune, or at least to prepare my mind to hear it: but the Abbess said, "I affirm to you, my lord, the Princess Amelia is out of danger; a cordial which Doctor David has given her, has restored her strength."

I could not doubt the assurance of the Abbess; I believed her, and waited with painful anxiety to hear further of my daughter. In about a quarter of an hour, of anguish on my part, David returned. Thanks to God! she was much better, and had insisted on continuing her vigils in the church, consenting only to kneel upon a cushion; and as I was indignant and disgusted that the Abbess and David should have yielded to her wish, I formally opposed it. David replied that it would have been dangerous to have opposed my daughter's wish, at a moment when she was under the influence of great nervous excitement; and it was, moreover, agreed that the poor child should leave the church at the hour of matins, to take some rest, and prepare herself for the ceremony.

"She is now in the church, then?" said I to David."

"Yes, my lord; but she will leave it in less than half an hour."

I made him conduct me to our closet, in the north tribune, from which I could view all the choir. There, amid the gloom that pervaded this vast church, illuminated only by the pale glimmering of the lamp, hanging in the sanctuary, I saw her praying fervently. I also threw myself upon my knees and thought upon my child. It struck three o'clock; two sisters who were sitting in the stalls, and had attentively been watching her, went to her and whispered to her; a few moments afterward, she crossed herself, rose up and traversed the choir, with a tolerably firm step. And oh! my beloved, when she passed under the lamp, her face appeared to me as white as the long veil which flowed around her.

I immediately quitted the tribune, thinking at first to hasten to her, but, that I feared a new emotion might prevent her taking a few minutes rest. I sent David to inquire if she was less indisposed. He returned and told me she felt better, and she would endeavor to sleep a little.

I remain at the Abbey, to attend the ceremony which takes place this morning. I think it will be useless, my dear wife, to send this letter to you thus unfinished. I will conclude it tomorrow, by relating to you the events of this sad day. Till then, farewell, my beloved. I am broken down with grief. Pity me.

CHAPTER THE LAST. .... RODOLPHE TO CLEMENCE.

THE thirteenth of January—an anniversary now doubly inauspicious!

My friend—we have lost her for ever.

All is over—all!

Listen to this recital.

It is indeed true. It is a fearful luxury to relate a horrible calamity. Yesterday, I was annoyed by the accident that kept you away from me. To-day, Clemence, I congratulate myself that you are not here; you would suffer too deeply.

This morning, when dozing, I was awakened by the sound of the bells: I started with affright: it seemed to me funereal; it was like a melancholy knell.

In fact, my daughter is dead to us, dead! From this day, Clemence, you must begin to carry mourning in your heart—a heart wont to beat maternally for her.

Let our child be buried under the marble of a tomb, or under the arches of a cloister—to us, what is the difference?

From this day, Clemence, we must regard her as dead. Besides, she is so very weak a creature; her health, altered by so many mortifications, and so many shocks, is so unsteady. Why should there be any death more complete? Adverse fate never becomes weary.

And, moreover, after my letter of yesterday, you must see that it would be happier for her to be really dead.

DEATH! these five letters have a strange appearance—do you not find it so? written concerning an idolized daughter—a daughter so beautiful—so charming—so angelic—only eighteen—and dead to the world?

Of what advantage can it be either to us or to her, that she should vegetate, a poor sufferer, in the sullen silence of the cloister? Why should she live, if she be lost to us? She must love her life dearly. What a terrible fate has her's been!

What I say is frightful: I know it; it is a barbarous egotism growing out of paternal love!

At noon she made her profession amid the most solemn pomp. Concealed behind the curtains of our tribune, I assisted at the ceremony. I have felt, but with stronger intensity than ever, all the poignant emotions which have stirred our hearts since her noviciate.

She is a fanciful creature, and they adore her; they generally believe that she is drawn toward a religious life by an irresistible inward calling; she is determined to see in her profession a world of happiness, and to regard the existence of all others, who do not embrace her opinions, as compaartively miserable.

At the lower end of the church, among the people, I saw two inferior officers of my guards—two aged and rough soldiers—bow their heads and weep.

There seemed to be in the very atmosphere a sad foreboding, a strange idea it may be; but we, in a manner, inhaled melancholy with our breath. Do you comprehend my thought? I almost realized it.

When the procession was over, our child was led into a hall belonging to the chapel, where it was necessary that the nomination of the new abbess should take place.

Thanks to my privilege as a sovereign, I went into the hall to attend Fleur-de-Marie on the return of the choir.

She soon entered.

Her emotion and feebleness were such that two sisters supported her.

I was terrified, yet less at the paleness of her features than at the expression of her smile. It seemed to me marked by a satisfaction truly ominous.

Clemence—I tell you, my dear, because soon, perhaps, we shall require courage—I am inclined to believe that our child is struck with a mortal madness.———

——After all, her life will be so wretched.——

Twice have I said to myself, when contemplating the probability of our child's early death—that this death would at least put an end to her cruel existence.——This thought is horribly foreboding. But if this calamity *is* to smite us, it is best to be prepared; is it not, Clemence?

To prepare ourselves by reflection for the misfortune which we anticipate is to taste that misfortune gradually, while slow anguish eats into the heart. It is a refinement of misery, self-inflicted. It is a thousand times more terrible than the blow that strikes us unforseen. At least stupor, virtual annihilation, spares us a part of this awful agony.

But the habitual feeling of compassion compels you to anticipate and prepare yourself. I probably would not suffer so much, my poor wife, if I had to apprize you of the fatal event to which I have been referring. You are alarmed—you observe that I caution you against the return of despairing sadness—I have told you the state of her heart; but, remember, I have added that it by no means occasions me much anxiety.

Yes, you are alarmed, if I speak as I do now—for although I left her so calm, the time is coming which shall close the subject of this letter; I repeat it to you, Clemence, it appears to me that she suffers more than can be known from her outward manner and habitual aspect.

Heaven grant that I may be deceiving myself, and that I may be mistaking for presentiments the hopeless sadness with which this mournful ceremony has inspired me

Fleur de Marie then entered into the grand hall of the chapter.

All the stalls were successively filled by the nuns. She modestly seated herself last of the row on the left. She leaned upon the arm of one of the sisters, for she seemed still too weak to walk alone.

At the upper end of the hall sat the Princess Julianne, having on one side the grand-prioress, and on the other a second dignitary holding in her hand the cross of gold—the symbol of abbatial authority.

There was a profound silence; the Princess rose, taking her cross in her hand, and said in a voice grave and distinct,

"My dear daughters, my great age obliges me to entrust to one younger than myself, this emblem of my spiritual power. (She exhibited her cross.) I am here authorized, by a bull of our Holy Peter. I shall, therefore, present to the blessing of my lord the Archbishop of Oppenheim, and for the approval of his royal Highness, the Grand Duke, our sovereign, that one of your number, my dear daughters, whom you shall choose to be my successor. Our Grand Prioress wishes you to state the result of the election; and to her whom you point out, I shall transmit my cross and my ring."

I did not cease for a moment to gaze upon my child.

There, in her stall, her two hands joined upon her bosom, her eyes downcast, half concealed by her white veil and the long, flowing folds of her black robe, she remained motionless and pensive. She by no means anticipated her elevation: the abbess had confided the secret only to me.

The Grand Prioress took a register, and read:

"Each of our dear sisters having been, according to rule, in-

vited, eight days were given them for depositing their votes in the hands of our Holy Mother. And they were enjoined mutually to conceal their secret choice up to this moment, in the name of our Holy Mother. I declare that one of you, my sisters, has, by her exemplary piety, and by her evangelical virtues, deserved the unanimous vote of the society; and that the election is in favor of our sister Amelia, who, in the world, was known as the lofty and powerful Princess of Gerolstein."

At these words, a sort of murmur of sweet surprise and happy satisfaction circulated in the hall. All the nuns fixed their eyes on my child with an expression of tender sympathy. In spite of my strong prejudices, I was deeply moved by this nomination, which, having been made at first secretly and individually, showed a unanimity really touching.

Fleur de Marie, stupefied, became still more pale. Her knees trembled so much, that she was obliged to lean with one hand on the side of the stall.

The abbess replied, in a distinct and grave voice:

"My dear daughters, you have done well in deciding that sister Amelia is the most worthy and deserving of you all. You have done well in recognizing her as your spiritual Superior. Let each of you reply in her turn, my dear daughters."

And every sister responded with a loud voice, "Freely and voluntarily have I chosen, and I choose sister Amelia for my holy mother and Superior." Overcome with a tumult of emotion, my poor child fell upon her knees, clasped her hands, and remained in this posture until the vote had been rendered. Then the Abbess, placing the cross and ring in the hands of the grand Prioress, advanced toward my daughter to take her by the hand and lead her to the Abbatial Chair.

My love, my gentle love, I must pause for one moment; I must take courage before I can relate to you the heart-rending scene.

"Arise, my dear daughter," said the Abbess, "come and occupy the seat which belongs to you; it has been won, not by your rank, but by your evangelical virtues."

As she said these words, the venerable Princess drew near my daughter to assist her to rise.

Fleur de Marie tremblingly advanced a few steps till she reached the middle of the Chapter-hall, when she stopped and said, in a voice whose calmness and strength astonished me—

"Pardon me, holy mother; I wish to speak to my sisters."

"Ascend first, my daughter, your Abbatial chair; from thence your voice should be heard."

"That place, holy mother, is, perhaps, not mine," answered Fleur de Marie, in a low and tremulous voice.

"What say you, my dear daughter?"

"So high a dignity is not made for me, holy mother."

"But the voices of all your sisters have elevated you to it."

"Suffer me, holy mother, here upon my knees, to make a solemn confession; and my sisters and yourself also, holy mother, will soon perceive that the humblest condition is not humble enough for me."

"Your modesty misleads you, my dear daughter," kindly said the Abbess, believing, indeed, that the unhappy child succumbed to a sentiment of exaggerated modesty; but I easily divined the avowals which Fleur de Marie was about to make.

Seized with affright, I cried out, in a supplicating voice—

"My child, I conjure you—"

It would be indeed impossible to tell you all that I read in the glance which Fleur de Marie cast upon me at these words. Then you will understand that in a moment she understood me. Yes! she understood that I was to share the shame of this horrible revelation. She perceived, that after such a confession, I might be accused—yes *I*—of falsehood. For, from the first, I had suffered it to be believed that Fleur de Marie had never left her mother.

At this idea the poor child imagined that she had been guilty of some black ingratitude toward me. She had not strength to continue speaking, but was silent, and drooped her head as if completely overcome.

"Yet once more, my dear girl," replied the Abbess, "your modesty deceives you; the unanimity of the choice of your sisters proves to you how worthy you are to fill my place. From the very fact that you have taken part in the joys of the world, there is the more merit in your renunciation of those joys. It is not her Highness the Princess Amelia that is chosen—it is sister Amelia. As regards us, your life began only upon the day when you first set foot in the house of the Lord; and it is that holy and exemplary life which we now recompense. I will tell you more, my dear child: had your life, before entering the pale of the church, been as guilty as it has on the contrary been pure and praiseworthy, the evangelical virtues of which you have given us an example during your residence here, would have expiated and redeemed, in the eyes of the Lord, all that had passed, however guilty it might have been. After this, my dear daughter, judge if your modesty ought not to be reassured."

This speech of the Abbess, as you will readily believe, my beloved, was so much more precious to Fleur de Marie, as she believed the past to be indelible. Unfortunately, this scene had moved her very deeply, and although she affected to be perfectly composed and firm, it seemed to me that the expression of her features was changed in a very alarming manner. Two several times she shuddered, passing her poor emaciated hand across her face.

"I think that I have convinced you, my dear daughter," replied the princess Julianne; "and that you will not choose to give your sisters so lively a cause for sorrow, as to refuse this token of their confidence and kind affection.

"Yes! holy mother," she replied, with an expression which struck me with alarm, and with a voice which grew fuller every moment; "I think *now* that I can accept it; but as I feel myself very much fatigued and by no means free from pain, if you will permit it, my dear mother, the ceremony of my consecration shall not take place for some days."

"It shall be done as you desire, my dear daughter; but until your dignity shall have been duly blessed and consecrated, take this ring, come into your place, our beloved sisters will pay you homage according to the rule."

And the superior slipping the pastoral ring upon the finger of Fleur de Marie, conducted her to the abbatial chair. It was a simple but touching sight. Close to the chair on which she took her seat, stood on one side the grand prioress holding the golden crucifix, and on the other the Princess Julianne. Each of the sisters advanced and bowed before our child, and kissed her hand respectfully.

I saw that her agitation was increasing every moment, that her features were becoming more and more altered; in a word, the whole scene was undoubtedly too much for her strength, for she fainted away before the procession of the nuns was at an end.

Judge of my terror; we bore her away into the apartment o the abbess.

David had not yet left the convent; he hurried in and gave her instant assistance. Oh! may he not have deceived me! but he assured me that this new accident had no other cause than the extreme weakness caused by the severe fasting, by the fatigues, and loss of sleep which my daughter had imposed upon herself during her long and hard novitiate.

I believed him, because in point of fact, her angelic features, although alarmingly pale, discovered no signs of any suffering, when she recovered her consciousness; on the contrary, I was struck by the radiant serenity of her fair brow. But again this very quietude alarmed me. It appeared to me that she entertained some secret hope of a speedy deliverance.

The superior having returned to the chapter to close the sitting, I remained alone with my daughter.

"My good, kind father—can you forget my ingratitude? can you forget, that, at the very moment in which I was about to make that painful confession, you asked my pardon."

"Be silent—I implore you."

"And I never once reflected," she replied bitterly, "that, while I was telling the whole world from what an abyss of degradation you had rescued me, I was in fact revealing the secret which you had kept for me so tenderly. I was publicly accusing you, my father, of an act of dissimulation, to which you had yielded only in order to insure to me an honorable and exalted life—oh, my father, can you pardon me?

I glued my lips to her forehead. She felt my tears drop upon her face. After she had kissed my hands repeatedly, she said—

"Now I feel better, my kind father. Now that I am here, dead, as our rule has it, to all the world, I would wish to make some legacies in favor of several persons; but, as everything that I possess belongs to you, will you give me your authority, my father, to do so?"

"Can you doubt it? Oh! I entreat you," I said to her, "retain no longer these sad thoughts. You shall soon be engaged in this duty. There is sufficient time."

"Doubtless, my kind father, I have yet long to live," she added, with an accent which, I know not wherefore, again made me shudder. I watched her more attentively, but no change in her features justified my uneasiness. Yes; I have still long to live!" she continued; "but I must no longer occupy myself with worldly business; for, henceforth, to-day I renounce everything that links me to the world. I entreat you, refuse me not."

"Command me. I will do whatever you desire."

"I wish that my tender mother should always keep in the little drawing-room, where she is wont to sit, my little embroidering-frame, with the piece of tapestry which I have begun."

"Your desires, my child, shall be gratified. Your apartment has been kept exactly in the same state as on the day when you left the palace; for everything which belonged to you has be-

come unto us an object of almost religious veneration. Clemeneo will be touched deeply by this thought of yours."

"As for you, my dear father, take, I entreat you, my great ebony arm-chair, in which I have so often sat, in which I have so deeply pondered."

"It shall be placed beside my own, in my study; and I shall fancy daily that I shall see you sitting there, as you were wont to sit," I answered, unable any longer to conceal my tears.

"Now I would fain leave some memorials of affection to those who showed so much interest in me in the hours of affliction. To Madam George I would wish to give my writing-desk which I last used; there will be a certain fitness in the present," she added, with her own sweet smile, "for it was she who began to teach me how to write, when I was at the farm. As to the venerable curate of Bouqueval, who was my first instructor in religion, I propose to give the beautiful crucifix from my oratory."

"Yes, my child."

"I wish to send my bandeau of pearls to my excellent little Rigolette; it is a simple ornament, which she may well wear in her beautiful black hair. If it be possible, since you know where Martial and Louve are to be found in Algeria, I could wish that courageous woman, who preserved my life, to have my cross of enamelled gold. These different memorials you will be so kind as to send as *gifts from Fleur de Marie*."

"I will execute the slightest of your wishes: you forget no one?"

"I think not, dearest father."

"Consider well; among those who love you, is there no one very unhappy? as unhappy as your mother and I? any one who regrets bitterly that you have entered this convent?" /.

The poor child understood me, pressed my hand, while a slight flush crossed her pale face.

Anticipating the question which I perceived she was afraid to put to me, I added: "He is better—he is no longer in any danger."

"And his father?"

"He is benefitted by the improvement of his son's health—he too is better. And to Henry: what will you give to Henry? A keepsake from you will be to him a dear and precious consolation."

"My father—offer him my *prie-dieu*. Alas! I have very often watered it with my tears; beseeching Heaven to give me strength to forget Henry, since I was unworthy of his love."

"How happy will he be, to see that you have retained a thought for him. As for the asylum for orphans and young girls forsaken by their parents, I should desire, my good father, that—"

Here Rodolphe's letter was brought to a rapid conclusion, by these words, written almost illegibly.

"Clemence—Murph will finish this letter—I have no more mind left—I am mad. Alas! the 13TH OF JANUARY."

The end of this letter, in the hand-writing of Sir Walter Murph, ran thus:

By the orders of his royal Highness, I finish this sad recital. My lord's two letters will have prepared your royal Highness for the distressing intelligence which it becomes my duty to communicate.

Three hours have elapsed since my lord was writing to your royal Highness: I waited in a neighboring room for the letter, to forward it by a courier. Suddenly I saw the Princess Julianne, enter with a terrified aspect. "Where is his royal Highness!" said she, with an agitated voice. "Princess, my lord is writing to the Grand Duchess the intelligence of this day." "Sir Walter, you must apprise my lord of a terrible event. You are his friend—go and tell him—from you this blow will be less terrible.'

I understood everything; I believed it best that I should communicate the dreadful news. The Abbess added, that the princess Amelia was sinking slowly, and that my lord should hasten to receive the last sighs of his daughter. Unhappily, I had not time enough gently to break the news. I entered the room; his royal Highness saw my emotion: "You come to impart to me some new misfortune." "An irreparable misfortune, my lord. But take courage!" "Ah! my presentiments!" cried he—and without adding another word, he rushed to the cloister. I followed him.

The Princess Amelia had been borne from the room of the abbess, after her last interview with her father, to her own cell. One of the sisters watched over her: at the expiration of an hour, she perceived that the Princess Amelia, who spoke at intervals, grew feeble, and became more and more oppressed. The sister requested her to inform the abbess. Doctor David was called: he attempted to remedy this new loss of strength by a cordial, but in vain; the beating of her pulse was scarcely sensible. He saw with despair, that her continued emotions had probably exhausted the little remaining strength of the Princess Amelia. There was no hope of saving her.

It was at that moment my lord arrived. The Princess Amelia had just received the last sacrament. A faint ray of consciousness still remained. Her hands were crossed upon her bosom: in one of them she held *the remains of her little rose-tree*.

My lord fell upon his knees beside her bed, and sobbed aloud.

"Pardon! my dear father—also of Henry—of my good mother—pardon!"

These were her last words.

In about an hour, she gave up her soul to God.

When his daughter had breathed her last sigh, my lord uttered not a word. His silence and his calmness were terrifying. He closed the eyelids of the princess, kissed her forehead several times with pious feeling, took the remains of the little rose-tree from her hand, and left the cell.

I followed him; he returned to the house without the Abb walls, and showing me the letter he had begun to your royal Highness, and to which he in vain attempted to add a few words, for his hand trembled convulsively, he said:

"It is impossible for me to write—I am utterly annihilated—my brain turns—write to the grand Duchess that I no longer have a daughter!"

I have now fulfilled the orders of my lord.

May it be permitted to me, as his oldest servant, to entreat your royal Highness to hasten your return, as much as the health of the Count d'Obigny will permit. Your presence alone can calm the despair of my lord. He insists upon watching every night the body of his daughter until the day when it shall be entombed in the Grand Ducal Chapel.

My sorrowful task is now accomplished, madam: deign to excuse the incoherency of this letter, and to receive the assurance of respectful devotion, while I have the honor to be

Your Highness's
Very obedient servant,
WALTER MURPH.

On the evening previous to the funeral ceremony of the Princess Amelia, Clemence and her father arrived at Gerolstein.

Rodolphe was not left alone on the day of the obsequies of Fleur de Marie.

THE END.

LETTER FROM EUGENE SUE TO THE EDITOR OF THE JOURNAL DES DEBATS.

SIR:—The "Mysteries of Paris" are done. Permit me to come forward publicly and thank you for having been so well-disposed to lend this work—unhappily as imperfect as it is incomplete—the large and powerful circulation of the *Journal des Debats*. My gratitude is the more ardent, sir, because many of the ideas interspersed through the work differ essentially from those which you have maintained with equal energy and talent, and because it is rare to meet with the courageous and honest impartiality which you have manifested in my behalf.

I would once more, sir, invoke that impartiality, that I may say a few words in favor of an humble publication, founded and entirely conducted by working men, under the title of "THE POPULA HIVE."H Certain trusty and enlightened artizans have set up this popular tribunal, upon which they exhibit their demands with as much propriety as moderation. (Let me refer, among many, to the equally touching and respectful letter addressed to the king by M. Duquesne, a journeyman printer.) The organization of labor, the restriction of competition, the tariff of salaries are there discussed by working men themselves, and, on this account, it seems to me that their voice should be listened to by all who are engaged in public affairs. Unfortunately, many more years may yet elapse before these great questions of vital importance shall be set to rest. While we stand idle, every day brings forward and develops new miseries, new individual calamities. The founders of "The Hive" have trusted that, by making each month an appeal in behalf of the most wretched of their brethren, they will, perhaps, be heard by the happy. Allow me, sir, to quote the first page of "The Popular Hive."

"LA RUCHE POPULAIRE.

"'To succor honorable misfortune is very well; to search out those who struggle with energy against vice, to come to their aid unknown, and avert in time the force of that temptation which leads to crime, is far better.'—RODOLPHE, in the *Mysteries of Paris*.

"If, in our estimation, the people cannot be efficaciously delivered or succored except by measures provided by the legislature, still that affords no just reason why we should be ungrateful for or repel gifts offered with delicacy.

"The part which M. Eugene Sue has given to 'Rodolphe,' in the 'Mysteries of Paris,' having inspired us with the thought of seeking honest and unhappy families, whom these titles render worthy of religious fellowship, we make our sacred appeal to the humanity of the rich; for one good deed is sometimes enough to banish evil, to rescue from misery, from despair, perhaps from crime, a family totally destitute. Alms degrade the object upon whom they are bestowed. Our counsel will principally be that labor or situations sufficiently remunerative be provided—something, above all, to place the poor beyond terrible want. We have to assist many interested and distressed families: the benevolent, by writing to the office of this journal, can learn where they are to be found, so that they can with their own hands administer their gifts.

"Among the many cases before us, let us cite that of a family consisting of a father, a mother, and four children, the eldest of whom is but six years of age; they have vainly begged for employment which would enable them to support life, but they have obtained none for the very reason which ought to excite the most touching interest—*because they have a numerous family.*

"Another of these families lost its chief, an honest journeyman painter, who, while working at his trade, fell from a scaffold four stories high. He left a wife pregnant, and very many young children, in the deepest grief and the greatest destitution."

It is with pleasure, I assure you, sir, that I have quoted this page, whereon my name is inscribed in so flattering a manner; for I shall deem myself recompensed beyond all my hopes, if I can persuade myself that I have, by my writings, occasioned any generous actions or charitable plans—and the idea, carried out by the founders of "The Popular Hive," seems to me of this character.

Thus will rich persons, who subscribe to this monthly journal (six francs a year, at the office of "The Hive," street of the Quatre-Fils, No. 17 in the Marais) be every month informed of some respectable and unfortunate object, whom it will give them pleasure to relieve; for—and let it be loudly proclaimed—there is generally in France much commiseration for the afflicted; but, in most instances, an opportunity is wanting to bestow charity in a way most beneficial to the heart, and, if it can be so termed, interesting. In this respect "The Popular Hive" will convey precious intelligence to those lofty souls, who seek for pure and noble delights.

One last word, sir; as you have done half for my work by the immense publicity of which you have given it, I am happy to inform you of a result, which I hope, you will rejoice at, as sincerely as I do. A letter has been written to me from Bourdeaux and Lyons, saying that many rich and humane persons in those cities, have united themselves in carrying out my project of a *bank for gratuitous loans to laborers without work*, and a certain individual here who makes the most generous and enlightened use of an immense fortune, has given me the most encouraging hopes with regard to a similar foundation in Paris.

Let us now trust, sir, that a legislator, truly the friend of the people, will take in hand these questions—relative

To the establishment of advocates for the poor.

*To the diminution of the exorbitant rates of interest levied by the Mont de Piété.**

To the guardianship exercised by the State over the children of those condemned to death or perpetual imprisonment.

To the reform of the penal code *in relation to violations of trust.*

And perhaps this book, recently assailed with so much bitterness violence, will at least be productive of some good results.

Be pleased once more to accept, sir, the expression of my lively gratitude, and the assurance of my most devoted sentiments.

EUGENE SUE.

PARIS, October 15, 1843.

* The only pawnbroking establishment in Paris, and licensed by the government.

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'Ed

THE

MYSTERIES OF PARIS.

A

ROMANCE OF THE RICH AND POOR.

BY

EUGENE SUE.

262498
19.12.31

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH BY

HENRY C. DEMING.

New-York:

J. WINCHESTER, NEW WORLD PRESS, 30 ANN STREET.

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MORE GEMS FROM THE HARPERS' MYSTERIES.

The extracts which we have previously given from the translation of our illustrious brethren have sufficiently proved that their edition of Eugene Sue's work is not English. The gem with which we favored the public last week proved that the copious extracts from the original with which the work abounds after having passed through the press of the Barons is no longer French, but a jargon which defies all human comprehension. We now propose to show of what the work is principally composed, and have selected for the edification of our readers the following passages, hoping that they will be more successful in deciphering their meaning than we have ourselves been.

* * * * * * * * *

Such was Cécily.—p. 319.

Never before was the full virtue of stars made manifest; language would be feeble to convey so forcible an idea of a beautiful woman as is done by the pungent power, the laconic brevity of the mysterious asterisks eight in number, followed by the tantalizing information that "such was Cecily." Whether each of the above stars represents a word or an idea we are at a loss to determine: all that we know is "* * * * * * * * such was Cecily."

But here follows more information of the same character:

He was a son of the grand family of misers.

* * * * * * *

Avarice is, above all, a negative, passive passion.

* * * * * * *

For Jacquea Ferrand risked, and risked much.—p. 182.

As we have understood that our pious brethren, after having printed a lying title page upon their book, have hypocritically asserted, when they were convicted of the falsehood, that they were induced to omit "*a few*(!) passages on account of their indelicacy," we have extracted from our own version of the Mysteries a translation of the mutilated paragraph above for the purpose of exposing this new subterfuge. It will also serve to show the wholesale manner these publishers have cut down the original and imposed upon the public. We have marked with italics in this extract from our version the few lines which the Harpers have condescended to give the public in their "complete edition without abridgment"

He belonged to that large family—the misers. The miser is almost invariably represented with laughable or grotesque traits of character, the worst of which is usually selfishness or acerbity. The greater part of the race accumulate their fortune by slow and trifling savings; a very few venture upon loans at an exorbitant interest; the most venturous never dare encounter the whirlpool of stock operations; and it would be regarded as an anomaly, if a miser, for the purpose of augmenting his treasures, should commit a crime, especially murder.

The peculiarity is easily explained *Avarice is essentially a negative or passive passion.* The miser, in all his plans and calculations, thinks more of growing rich by daily retrenchment of all that is not absolutely necessary, than of accumulating at the injury or prejudice of others. He is essentially conservative in his character. The miser is weak, timid, cunning, distrustful; he never acts upon the offensive; he is indifferent to the miseries of mankind, contented with the conviction that he is not the author of them; he is, above all, more devoted to what is certain than to what is probable: to the positive, than to the negative; to facts, than to theories. Or, in other words, he is a miser because he has faith in nothing but the *gold* held in his vaults. Speculations, apparently the most safe, are temptations which the miser easily overcomes; for, however secure the adventure may appear, there is always a chance of a loss, and he prefers to lose the interest of his money than to place the principal in the least jeopardy A character, therefore, so timid; so opposed to all hazard, is in direct antagonism with the daring energy of the desperado, who risks the galleys, or even his head, for the purpose of appropriating a fortune. Risk is a word which does not exist in the miser's vocabulary. It was for this reason that Jacques Ferrand was a curious specimen of the miser, or perhaps an entirely new variety of the genus; *for Jacques Ferrand ran risks, and great risks.*—p. 133, 134

This is one instance among a thousand in which the work of Mr. Town destroys all sense, all connection. What can be understood of the meaning of the author from the few disjointed sentences which he has kindly given in the above extract? Why not omit the whole passage, if any part of it was to be omitted? What conceivable reason is there for omitting any portion of it? The reason is obvious. Mr. Town is less to blame than his publishers; they expurgated every passage that was not absolutely essential to the thread of the narrative, in order, in the first place, to hurry their edition through the press to take advantage of public curiosity, and, in the next place, to crowd the work into as few pages as possible in order to undersell the full and complete edition of the Mysteries of Paris which we have now given to the public.

Let not our readers suppose that the above is a solitary instance of mutilation: on the very next page to the passage we have quoted above we find the following:

* * * * * * *

One single passion, or rather appetite, but most disgraceful, ignoble, shameful, but almost ferocious, raised him often to phrensy

* * * * * * *

Save this weakness, Jacques Ferrand loved but gold
He loved gold for the sake of gold;
Not for the enjoyment it procured; he was stoical

* * * * * * *

p. 133.

If our space would permit we would treat this passage in the same manner as we have the one which precedes it; but as there are sixty-five lines omitted in the above extract, we must refer the reader to our edition of the Mysteries. To supply all the "outs" in the Harpers' version would amount to a little less than a republication of our own. These trifling omissions must be taken in connection with the entire pages which we have before convicted our pious brethren of having expurgated in order to comprehend the magnitude of the fraud.

Every three pages we are favored with paragraphs like these:

"But I tell you that if you wish, repulsive as you are—" * *

* * * * * * *

p. 323.

The reader will excuse us for preceding this new episode by an introduction. * * * * * *

* * * * * * *

This being said, let us resume.—p. 238.

What "being said"? Enlighten us, "Fletch."

It was a spectacle of wild and savage energy.

At each stroke, the thick and long hair of La Louve, untied by the violence of her movements, shook about her head like a shaggy mane of copper color. * * * * * *

Suddenly, from the other side of the island resounded a cry of distress, a cry of terrible, desperate agony La Louve shuddered, and stopped short. Then sustaining herself on the water with one hand, with the other she pushed back her thick hair, and listened —p. 289.

As this "out" represented by the five stars in the above passages mutilates one of the prettiest pieces of description in the book: we will extract the corresponding passage from our own:

What a spectacle of wild and unconquerable energy! As she dashed the ruffled waters with her hands, her thick and long tresses fell round her face, like a dark mane, upon which the beams of the sinking sun played. Had it not been for the ardent gaze with which her eye was fastened upon the goal—had it not been for the anguish stamped upon her visage, it would have seemed that the wild mistress of the poacher was disporting in the waves, in wantonness of spirit, so easily and proudly, like a sea-bird, she pursued her watery course. Her white and muscular arms, upon which she bore the tattooed memento of her lover, clove the waves, which dashed around her, and fell like liquid pearls from her broad shoulders and bare bosom, which glistened like submerged marble. A cry of distress—of terrible agony and despair—now broke from the opposite shore. Louve arrested her wild career, and floated for an instant like a swan upon the water. Sustaining herself with one hand, she threw back with the other her long and drenched hair, and listened with a strained and attent ear —p. 223.

These extracts will imperfectly show the manner in which the Harpers have imposed upon the public. We say imperfectly, for in order to form any idea of the way in which the original has been mutilated, the two editions should be attentively compared, or rather the Harpers' version should be compared with the original; the translator should be followed step by step to learn the manner in which he has coolly passed over sentences and half sentences, lines and half lines, and words without number, as if they did not exist in the work he was pretending to render.

We think we have given to the public gems enough to prove that the Harpers' edition of the Mysteries of Paris consists of bad French, worse English, and stars—that it resembles a certain leg of mutton, which Dr. Johnson pronounced to be "as bad as bad could be—ill-fed, ill-kept, ill-killed, and ill-dressed."

ALISON'S HISTORY OF EUROPE.

We would call the notice of the reader to the following commendation of Mr. Gould's abridgment of this work, lately published by us. It is everywhere recommended for adoption by our schools and colleges. The following is from the pen of George D. Prentice, the highly distinguished Editor of the Louisville Journal, from which paper we extract it:

History of Europe from the Commencement of the French Revolution, in 1789, to the Restoration of the Bourbons, in 1815, *by Archibald Alison, F. R. S. E., Advocate. Abridged from the last London edition, for the use of general readers, colleges, academies, and other seminaries of learning*, by Edward S. Gould. New-York, J. Winchester, New World Press, 1843.

As a general rule, we are not favorable to abridgments of great and useful works, on the principal that we cannot have too much of what is good and necessary. But we are advocates of the abridgment of evils where they cannot be extinguished; and the manifold errors of Mr. Alison in every department of his history—in philosophy, logic, rhetoric, grammar, philology, and matters of fact—must always interfere with his claims to greatness as a historian. He possesses but few of the characteristics that have made Thucydides, Tacitus, Josephus, Hume, Robertson, Gibbon, Prescott, and Irving, immortal as historians. He has been complimented greatly for his diligence in hunting up authorities and spreading their names over his margin, but we more than doubt the value of this evidence since we have compared Mr. Alison's references with the authorities. But few of those who have extravagantly praised his display on this head have attempted the verification of his references by actual search. On this subject we present, below, the views of a distinguished writer. He says: "A grand array of quotations is but a most imperfect test of diligence, still less of capacity. It is the usual resource of every Peter Pangloss, L.L. D., and A. S. S.; nothing is more easy, as every one who knows the tricks of the craft can fully testify, than to fill your margins with a cabalistic array of abbreviations referring to books which you never have opened. Even when the originals have been consulted, they prove nothing more than that the writer has made the same kind of acquaintance with his authority that you gain by your look at a literary lion in the squeeze of a *soiree* or a *conversazione*; while a misprint, faithfully transmitted from compiler to compiler, not unfrequently reveals the secret of the appropriations of other folks' feathers, so ingeniously applied." This is a pretty faithful picture of Mr. Alison's *laborious* references. We have compared enough of the references with the originals to know what his margins are mere show or parade-grounds.

But the materials gathered by Mr. Alison for this history were immense, and, if he had possessed the capacity of handling them aright, he might have made the most charming and instructive history ever written, a history that would have made itself a home in the heart of the world, and have gathered around it a public opinion that would have discouraged all attempts at abridgment. The literary world would have cherished the work of the master and have given no encouragement to the diminisher. Works of the latter class are not usually popular, for it is true, as was said recently by a good thinker: "Generally speaking, no set of works has done more mischief in educational literature than the sad jobs perpetrated under the name of abridgments, as well as in the other productions, more pretending in aspect, but virtually of the same class—error perpetuated by transmission from writer to writer—a torch extinguished, yet smouldering with unsavory smoke, passed by the blind bearers from hand to hand. These works reduce the most interesting of studies to a *caput mortuum* of dates and facts; a weariness to the mind, and a burden of which the memory discharges itself as soon as it is cast aside; shadows of shades; mere arid outlines, or worse, starved compilations, in which the writer attempts to give a spurious show of originality by a few coarse and gaudy touches: the queer; the quaint; the romantic; measurements of high head-dresses and long-peaked shoes; prices of beeves, and pigs, and muttons; abuse of priestcraft; exaggerated anecdotes of rudeness or simplicity, ignorance or credulity—all mashed together raw, without any correct appreciation of the state of society in which they subsist, conveying a conventional and theatrical idea of past times, but utterly destructive to all historical pertinence or utility." A large proportion of these objections to abridgments apply with much more force to the work of Mr. Alison, than to the abridgment of it made by Mr. Gould. The latter has accomplished his task with a far greater degree of success than we anticipated for him. We sat down to inspect his labors with strong prepossessions against him, but his work grew on our esteem as we perused it. We have in this abridgment the life and soul of the great subject on which Mr. Alison undertook to enlighten the world, without that garniture of narrow prejudice, stately absurdity, solemn trifling, ridiculous inferences, stilted periods, false statements, and glaring blunders in grammar and philology with which Mr. Alison has clothed every chapter of the original work. The edition of the history, just published by the Harpers, must satisfy those who were incredulous before, of the incurable nature of Mr. Alison's stolidity. His answers to some of the objections made by Chancellor Kent to portions of the seventy-sixth chapter of the work are among the most silly and ridiculous things of their kind to be found in any language. While reading them we were continually reminded of the Bourgeois Gentilhomme of Moliere while the tutor was endeavoring to teach him the difference between prose and poetry. We think that any one who reads Mr. Alison's amended chapter on America will feel satisfied that Mr. Gould treated the work with perfect propriety in omitting this series of childlike blunders. When the Harpers undertake to extract blood from turnips we wish them more success than they appear to have met with in trying to get sense and truth from Mr. Alison. In his letter to the Harpers, Mr. Alison prided himself very much on the fact that his work had been translated into several of the continental languages of Europe, and we think he is under obligations to Mr. Gould for translating it into English, for a most excellent translation he has made of it.

We strongly commend this abridgment of Alison's History by Mr. Gould as an excellent and valuble service to the general reader. None can derive much benefit from the complete work, unless he is prepared to read it critically, for it will lead those, who are not, into many, many errors. If both were offered us at the same price, we should take Gould's abridgment, without hesitation, in preference to Harpers' edition.

Huddeman has a small lot of Winchester's edition put up in various degrees of elegance. Those who desire a luminous picture of the French revolution will find it in this work.

FROISSART'S CHRONICLES COMPLETED.

Our edition of Froissart's Chronicles has induced Mr. Davezac to review that great work, in the last number of the "Democratic." We lay before our readers the following extracts, which present at the same time the interesting aspect of Feudal Europe, such as it was when the Canon of Chimay composed his immortal works, and just appreciations both of the author's style and of the peculiar individual qualifications which fitted him for the mighty task he has executed. Our popular Edition has brought into the cottage of the laborer, as themes of winter family conversation—to the workshop of the mechanic, to solace his mind after hours of bodily toils, the pleasing narratives of the romantic events of the middle age. The names of Edward, of the Black Prince, of De Clissons, the Arteveldes, and Du Guesclin, will no longer be empty sounds—they will bring with them as necessary associations, the memory of the important events with which the chronicler has inseparably connected them:

"After the works of fiction with which the cheap presses had fed their readers so abundantly as to have surfeited them with light unsubstantial food, we are served at last, with good, plain, strong, and yet not unsavory nutriment—no less a book than the celebrated Chronicles of Froissart; and, if we may judge of the eagerness with which the mass of readers have purchased these, from the fact of having observed several cabmen intently occupied in perusing them at their stands, we should infer that the enterprising publisher has been well repaid for having better appreciated than his rivals the soundness of the public taste.

No man that lived during the fourteenth century, ever had such opportunities, as the accident of his birth, his varied pursuits and motley fortunes, threw in the way of Froissart, not to study that system,—(abstract meditations were neither his habit, nor congenial to the cast of his mind)—but to view and depict his contemporaries in all the various relations of political, civil, and private life. Born of humble parents—(as we infer since he began the study of heraldry, intending it as a profession)—he was no stranger, however, to the interests, opinions, and manners of those whom we would now term the middle classes. He has sketched, with inimitable art, the characteristic traits of the Flemish burghers, a race whose posterity in the Hanseatic cities, and in the Netherlands, present to this day family features proving the early talent of Flemish artists for perfect imitation of their models. A priest afterward more through love of ease and elegant idleness, than from any real vocation for the arduous and stern duties of that holy station, his long intimacy with high dignitaries of the church, gave him, as subjects to paint from life, in unfading colors, those voluptuous abbots, wealthy bishops, and lordly prelates, always censured by the church, who vying with the sturdiest knights in brute strength and martial prowess, with the most unprincipled statesmen in crafty policy, with the most dissolute of the laity in licentiousness, united the rudeness of the soldier with the sloth of the monk; while lacking both the generous frankness of the one, and the ready devotion of faith of the other.

The second moral childhood of European societies has secured to us of modern days the advantage of having obtained the unalloyed productions of two original literatures. The Greeks had no curtain drawn over their past. There were among them, previous to their two great poems of heroic and social life, no traditions of a higher civilization, swept away by barbarians; none of a greater perfection of those arts they loved, and worshipped as divine, even in their first imperfect efforts. Hence we find in their works no trace of that emulous striving with the giants of earlier days, which we discover in every page of Latin authors. The architects, the painters, the sculptors of Greece copied neither pictures, statues, nor temples. They drew, they modelled, from nature itself—from nature exuberant and young, before her wonders had palled on sated artists, and before she had become tired, as it were, of being too often portrayed. In the same manner, during the middle ages, the Troubadours in their artless lays, the Chroniclers in their unstudied tales, obeyed only the inspiration of their genius. Free from the thraldom of precepts from the dread of criticism, they consulted, as living archives, their own remembrance of events, the memory of aged chiefs, or that of time-worn minstrels."

It would give us pleasure to extend our extracts from this able and highly polished review; but of course those who take an interest in the subject will refer to the distinguished periodical in which it appears.

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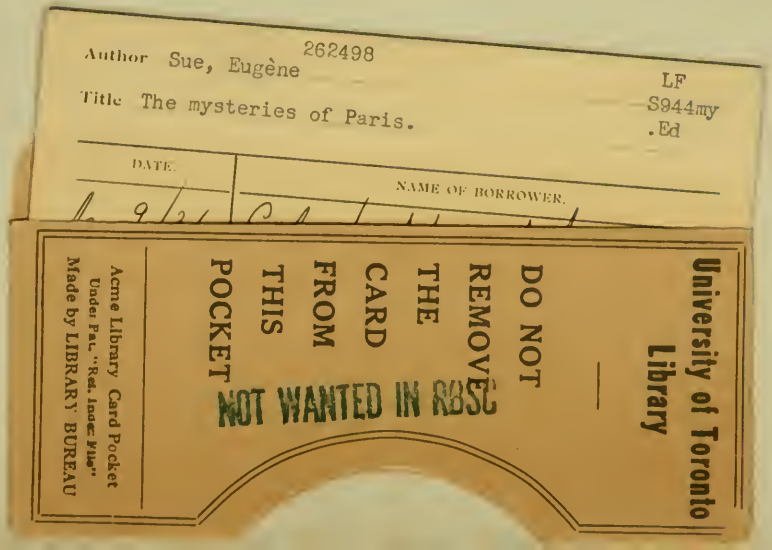
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